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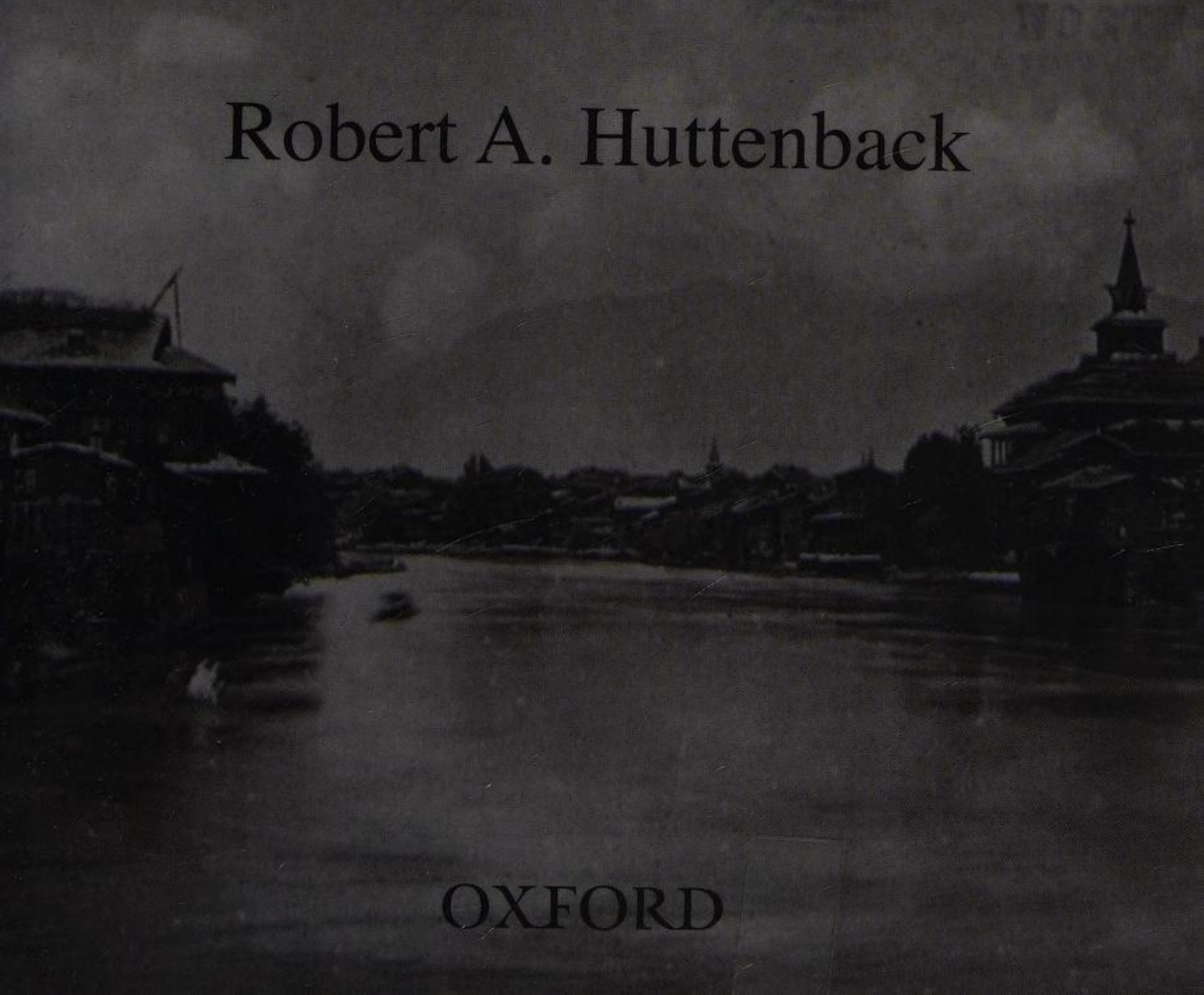
KASHMIR and the BRITISH RAJ

1847–1947

Robert A. Huttenback



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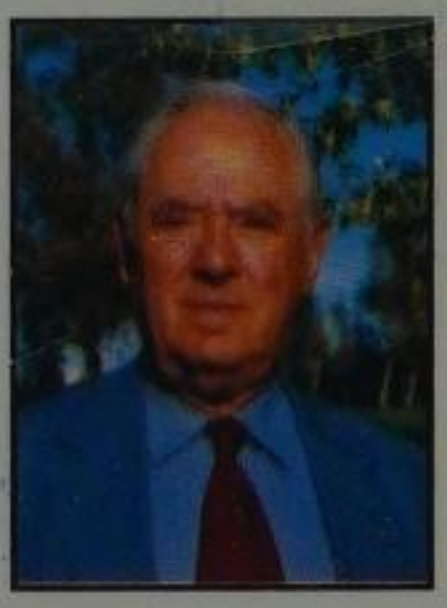

About the Author

Dr Robert A. Huttenback received his doctorate in 1959 from UCLA. His academic field of concentration is the history of the British Empire and the Commonwealth, with special emphasis on India. He conducted research throughout the former British Empire under the auspices of the Fulbright Commission, the Ford Foundation, the Carnegie Foundation, the American Institute of Indian Studies, the Social Science Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Office of Naval Research, the National Science Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He is the author of seven books and countless articles, papers and reviews. Dr Huttenback was associated with the California Institute of Technology for twenty years. He held the rank of Professor of History, and the administrative posts of Master of Student Houses, Dean of Students, and Chairman of the Division of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 1977, Dr Huttenback was appointed the Chancellor of the University of California at Santa Barbara and is a senior professor of History.

KASHMIR

AND THE BRITISH RAJ

1847–1947

CONTINUATION ON SAME SCALE
Soda Plains
Lingzi Thang Plains
CHITRAL
GILGIT
HUNZA
NORTH-WEST FRONTIER
KASHMIR
PUNCH
KASHMIR
LADAKH
ZASKAR
NAGAR
KISHTWAR
RUPSHU
PESHAWAR
KOHAT
NAOSHERA
HAZARA
Abbottabad
Mardan
Swat
Dir
Chitral
Gilgit
Skardu
Astor
Kashmir
Srinagar
Leh
Kargil
Jammu
Rawalpindi
Campbellpur
Attock
Bannu
Miranshah
Wana
Tank
Dera Ismail Khan
Fort Sandeman
Kohat
Peshawar
Jalalabad
Kabul
Afghanistan
Baltistan
Ladakh
Zaskar
Nagar
Kishtwar
Rupshu
Punch
Jammu
Sialkot
Gujranwala
Lahore
Amritsar
Ferozepur
Multan
Montgomery
Jhang Maghiana
Shahpur
Sahiwal
Mianwali
Bhakkar
Leiah
Sind Sagar Doab
Jech Doab
Bari Doab
Soda Plains
Lingzi Thang Plains
Karakoram Pass
Khunjerab Pass
Shandur Pass
Babusar Pass
Burzil Pass
Zoji La
Banihal Pass
Photala
Gilgit R.
Indus R.
Kabul R.
Jhelum R.
Chenab R.
Ravi R.
Sutlej R.
Swat R.
Kunar R.
Kurram R.
Gomal R.
Tochi R.
Zhob R.
Shyok R.
Nubra R.
Suru R.
Dras R.
Kishanganga R.
Sind R.
Tarbela
Mangla
Rawalpindi
Campbellpur
Attock
Peshawar
Abbottabad
Mardan
Swat
Dir
Chitral
Gilgit
Skardu
Astor
Kashmir
Srinagar
Leh
Kargil
Jammu
Sialkot
Gujranwala
Lahore
Amritsar
Ferozepur
Multan
Montgomery
Jhang Maghiana
Shahpur
Sahiwal
Mianwali
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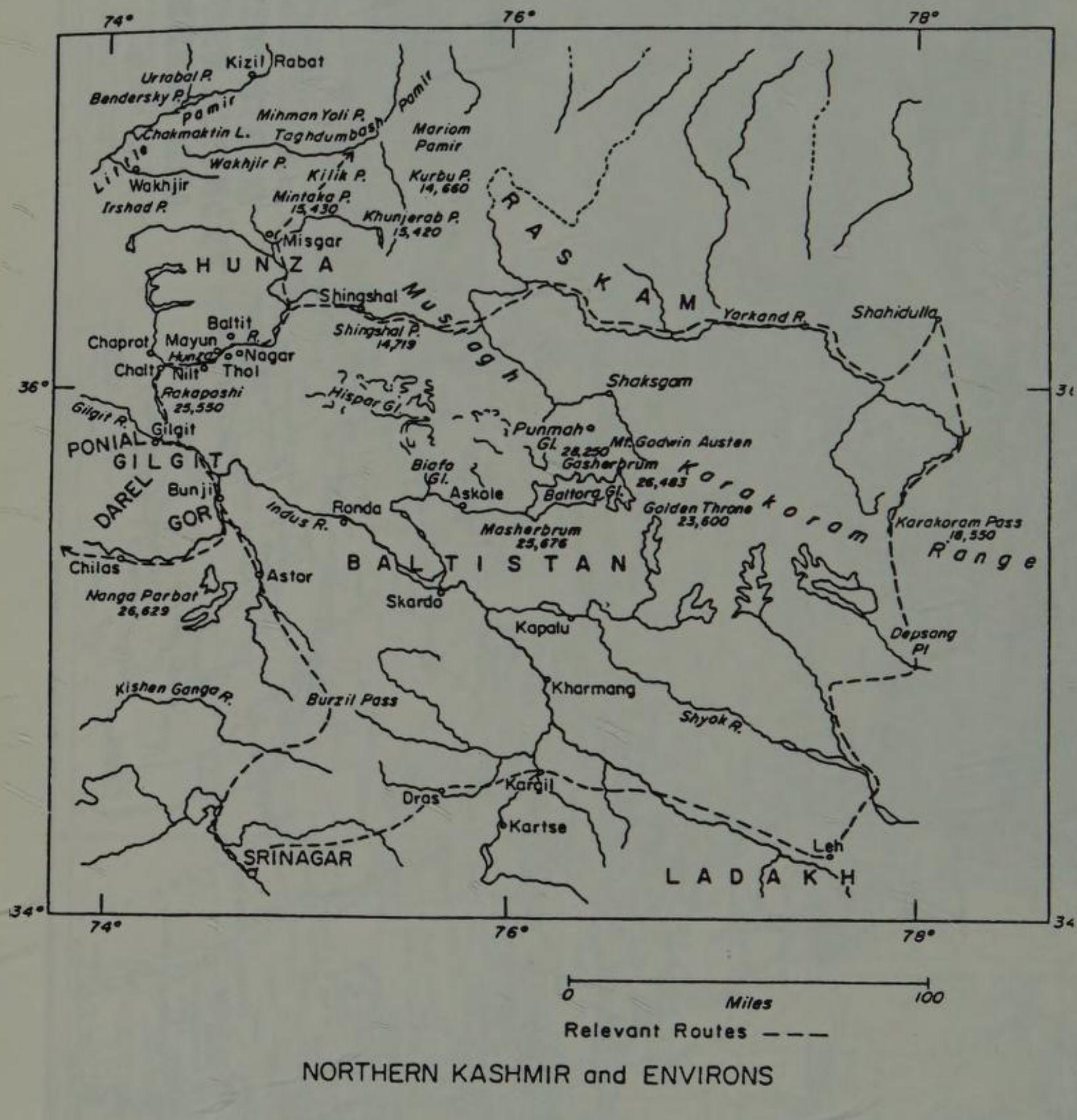

NORTHERN KASHMIR and ENVIRONS

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AND THE BRITISH RAJ
1847–1947

Robert A. Huttenback

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS
Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP
Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide in
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Dar es Salaam Delhi Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi Kolkata
Kuala Lumpur Madrid Melbourne Mexico City Mumbai Nairobi
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ISBN 0 19 579967 4
Cover Design: K.B. Abro
Typeset in Times
Printed in Pakistan by
Mas Printers, Karachi.
Published by
Ameena Saiyid, Oxford University Press
Plot No. 38, Sector 15, Korangi Industrial Area, PO Box 8214
Karachi-74900, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most dramatic change wrought by the Second World War was the dissolution of the great empires, notably the British. No longer were vast stretches of Africa and Asia to be daubed pink in the atlases of the world, as had been the case before 1945, when over one-fourth of the earth's surface was ruled one way or the other from London or the British Commonwealth capitals. Nowhere was a change in sovereignty more riveting than on the densely populated Indian subcontinent with its numerous ethnic groups, religions and languages, crowded into many hundreds of thousands of square miles.

It is not the purpose of this book to discuss in any detail the tortuous path that led to the creation of a largely Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. But it is important to remember that India, rapidly shrinking in the immediate post-war period, consisted not only of British India, but also of some 570 princely states, each of which maintained a separate and distinct relationship with the central authority of the British Raj. The end of British hegemony connoted a Constitutional restoration of a situation very similar to that which existed before the advent of the East India Company and later the Crown in the late sixteenth century. It resulted in the restoration of the *status quo ante* and brought on a 'lapse of paramountcy'. This signified that the ruler of a state would have the discretion to decide to which new dominion he would offer his and his peoples' allegiance. Independence was never considered a serious option; although both the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Kashmir hoped it might be otherwise.

Since all but two states were completely surrounded by territory which was to become part of either India or Pakistan, the question of their respective fealty was essentially a foregone conclusion. In the case of three states, controversy did arise. The smallest and least significant of these was Junagadh, situated along the Gulf of Kathiawar, with India to the east and only a sea-link to Pakistan to the west. Its Muslim Nawab ruled over a Hindu population. On 15 August 1947, India's Independence Day, the Nawab asserted his right of accession and opted for Pakistan. The newly independent Indians protested, established an economic blockade and sent in a 'liberation army' of

Hindu volunteers. Pakistan was in no position to intervene; thus tiny Junagadh became part of India.

The situation was not greatly different when it came to Hyderabad. Whereas Hyderabad was one of the largest Indian princely states and Junagadh was one of the smallest, the Nizam of Hyderabad, like the Nawab of Junagadh, was a Muslim ruling over a largely Hindu population. The Nizam, one of the richest men in the world, wanted to maintain his independence, despite his state's location within Indian territory. Size seemed to have its privileges and Delhi, for a while, respected the Nizam's wishes. A one-year 'stand still' agreement was signed by the two parties. But as soon as the stipulated time period had elapsed, two divisions of the Indian Army's Southern Command marched into Hyderabad, ending the Nizam's dreams of independence forever.

Kashmir was the only state left in a disputed condition. In contrast to Junagadh and Hyderabad, Pakistan was deeply concerned that this large, strategically located and predominantly Muslim state might become part of India. It was an intolerable nightmare for Pakistan. Kashmir's Hindu ruler, Hari Singh, wished to maintain his independence, like the Nizam. Under increasing pressure from India and Pakistan, he vacillated and signed a 'stand still' agreement with India and Pakistan. Although a similar arrangement was negotiated with India previously, it was apparently never promulgated until the situation in Kashmir deteriorated beyond repair.

The anti-Muslim policies and autocratic behaviour of the ruling house only exacerbated the situation, and around late August, early September 1947, the Muslim cultivators in Poonch, located in the south-west corner of Kashmir proper, rose up in revolt against the perceived outrages inflicted on them by the Dogra Rajput (Hindu) landowners. Their plight invoked the sympathy of their co-religionists in neighbouring Pakistan, who crossed over the border to support the oppressed. Soon they were followed by a massive incursion of thousands of Pathan tribesmen, allegedly supported by the government of Pakistan. These tribesmen were more interested in plunder than justice for Muslim farmers. Their immediate objective was to capture Srinagar airport because its occupation would effectively prevent any outside interference. Their progress was slow, as the diversions were many.

As the Pathans advanced closer to Srinagar, the Maharaja became increasingly alarmed. Finally he determined that the best course of

action would be to accede to India, which he did on 26 October. However, the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, insisted that in view of the complex racial and religious configuration of Kashmir, the population should ratify the Maharaja's decision, once the raiders were driven out and order had been restored. Once Jawaharlal Nehru and the Indian cabinet agreed with this proposal, the first battalion of the Sikh Regiment was airlifted from Delhi to Srinagar, just in time to save the airport from falling into the hands of the Pathan irregulars. Had this not occurred, Indian intervention in Kashmir would have been impossible at that time.

Urged on by frustration and disappointment, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Governor-General of Pakistan, and his government unleashed the Pakistani Army to confront the Indian battalions in Kashmir. For the first time, Kashmir became the catalyst for a full-blown war between India and Pakistan, which occurred only a few weeks after Independence.

India appealed to the United Nations and under its auspices, a ceasefire was negotiated to take effect from 1 January 1949. Under the terms of the agreement, India maintained control of Hindu Jammu, which was never really an issue open to question, the populous and Muslim vale of Kashmir, as well as Buddhist Ladakh. Pakistan was to hold sway over the remaining one-third of the state, comprising largely of the very mountainous north-west. The only good road into Kashmir was from the plains, which ran from Rawalpindi in Pakistan to Srinagar. From this time on, the road became useless except for the United Nations peacekeepers, who also were part of the ceasefire agreement.

Almost one hundred years ago when India faced Pakistan in the highlands of Kashmir, the British felt that their hold on the subcontinent was vulnerable to a Russian invasion. It was not the first time that the fear of a foreign invasion had aroused the attention of the men in power in Calcutta. Earlier, Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 had also raised the spectre of the young general leading an assault on India.

The destruction of the French fleet by Nelson at the Battle of the Nile, and Napoleon's defeat outside Acre did little to diminish the threat in British eyes. The British Indian authorities consequently engaged in a feverish round of diplomatic and military activities to shore-up the north-western portions of their territories despite the obvious impracticability of the French, or anyone else for that matter,

marching a significant force through the arid and hostile lands leading to South Asia. Much closer than the French in Egypt were the Russians in Central Asia.

The fact that a mighty chain of mountains divided the British and Russian 'spheres of influence', and that Russia did not seriously wish to penetrate it, was rarely appreciated in London and certainly never in Calcutta. The rulers of British India seemed somewhat paranoid when it came to the subcontinent's northern frontier. It should be noted that the more sensitive British statesmen and officials realized the fragility of an imperial structure whose strength rested largely on a myth, and would therefore lose its power should any doubt develop regarding its strength. Hence, it was unrest and dissidence on the frontier that was to be feared more than an actual foreign invasion. Besides, the entire history of India had sensitized its rulers to the danger that always seemed to lurk beyond the passes. Be that as it may, the question of how to combat the clearly perceived danger of a Russian invasion became compelling when limitations of both gold and armed might precluded the direct acquisition of the hostile lands to the north of the Indian plains.

Due perhaps to its largely ephemeral nature, the whole evanescent struggle became romanticized into what was called the 'Great Game'. Kipling's Kim played it, along with a myriad of fictional heroes. Sir Henry Forsythe was sent to pacify the lands to the north of Kashmir.

> For all his great brain, he was a man of one idea, and that idea—'the North safeguarded'. Mere men, himself included, were for him no more than pawns in the great game to be played out between two empires, on the chessboard of Central Asia.[1]

In one of L. Adams Beck's stories, a young soldier is killed on the frontier. 'I am not sorry for Harry,' the hero avers, '…He knew—we all know—that he was on guard here holding the outposts against blood and treachery and terrible things—playing the Great Game…'[2]

G.A. Henty, the doyen of late nineteenth century adventure story writers, waxed eloquence in the introduction of one of his numerous Imperial epics, addressed to 'My Dear Lads':

> In these pages, you will see the strength and weakness of these wild people of the mountains; their strength lying in their personal bravery, their determination to preserve their freedom at all costs, and the nature of their

> country. Their weakness consists in their want of organization, their tribal jealousies, and their impatience of regular habits and of the restraint necessary to render them good soldiers. But when led and organized by English officers, there are no better soldiers in the world. ...Guided by British advice, led by British officers, and it may be, paid by British gold, ... [the tribal North] is likely to prove an invaluable ally to us when the day comes that Russia believes herself strong enough to move forward toward the goal of all her hopes and efforts of the last fifty years, the conquest of India....[3]

The curious breed of romantic 'men on the spot' who guarded the frontier marches, did indeed believe themselves engaged in a struggle of cosmic significance. This illusion was supported not only by writers of fiction, but by a press and public becoming ever more enamoured of imperial grandeur, as well as the irresistible strength of British arms and national virtue. Besides the game was not very expensive in terms of either men or treasure.

Kashmir and its environs were to be the playing board for the 'Great Game'. In 1846, the lucrative province of Punjab at last came under the British flag. Instrumental in the acquisition was the Dogra Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh. The new princely state of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, owed its creation to the desire to reward him, while at the same time creating a northern buffer between India proper, the advancing Russian battalions to the north-west, and the somnambulate giant, China, to the north-east.

Gulab Singh, now elevated to the dignity of Maharaja, ruled over a territory that more or less ran from 73° to 81° east longitude and from 32° to 36° north latitude. It fluctuated somewhat in size over the years, but at the close of this study, it amounted to some 80,900 square miles. Kashmir has been characterized as a house with many stories, reaching ever upward from Jammu on the South to the great mountain sentinels to the north. Here the limits of the state run east from the passes of the Hindu Kush to the Pamirs past Rakaposhi (25,561 ft) along the Mustagh Range to Mount Godwin Austen (28,265 ft), Gasherbrum (28,100 ft), and Masherbrum (25,600 ft), and finally to the Karakoram Range and the high, arid wastes of Ladakh.

The heart of the state was the vale of Kashmir. To the west and north lay the Dard lands, including the Shinaki 'republics' of Darel, Tangir and Chilas and Gilgit, Chitral, Hunza, and Nagar. Directly to the north is Baltistan and to the east are vast empty stretches of Ladakh.

Gulab Singh might have been excused, wrote the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* in its 1908 edition, if he had described the entire dominions as mountains.

> ... There are valleys, and occasional oases in the deep cannons of the mighty rivers; but mountain is the predominating feature and has strongly affected the history, habits, and agriculture of the people. Journeying along the haphazard paths, which skirt the river banks, till the sheer cliff bars the way and the track is forced thousands of feet over the mountain-top, one feels like a child wandering in the narrow and tortuous alleys which surround some old cathedral in England....[4]

The 1901 Census revealed a total population of 2,905,578, consisting of 2,154,695 Muslims, 689,073 Hindus centred in Jammu, and 35,047 Buddhists scattered throughout Ladakh.

NOTES

1. Maud Driver, *The Great Amulet* (London, 1914), p. 453. Quoted in A.J. Greenberger, *The British Image of India* (London, 1969), p. 95.
2. Ibid., p. 96.
3. G.A. Henty, *For Name and Fame or, Through The Afghan Passes*, (New York, no date), p. iv.
4. *Imperial Gazeteer of India* (Oxford, 1908), XV, p. 73.

1

KASHMIR AS AN IMPERIAL FACTOR DURING THE REIGN OF GULAB SINGH (1846–1857)

Although Kashmir's years of quasi-independence were brief, the recounted history of the region goes back many aeons.

The glories of Hindu Kashmir, as recorded by the twelfth century poet Kalhana and his successor, Jonaraja, in the celebrated *Rajatarangini*, persisted despite periodic foreign incursions until the fourteenth century, when the Muslims established themselves as kings, and inaugurated a succession of dynasties who were to rule the valley until the early nineteenth century. Of these Muslim rulers, the greatest were the Mughals, who held sway from 1586 until the decay of their power in 1753 ushered in a period of oppressive Afghan hegemony.

In turn, the Durrani governors were driven out by the armies of the redoubtable Ranjit Singh, who in 1819 annexed Kashmir to the Sikh Khalsa. To all these strangers, Kashmir and its environs provided a playground and an escape from the searing summer heat in the surrounding hills and plains. The Mughal emperors loved rushing water, and took their pleasure in the magnificent gardens they created on the shores of the Dal Lake. But climate and natural beauty were not all that lured the invaders to Kashmir. The strategic importance of the valley, astride the routes to Central Asia, and the incomparable shawl wool looms proved to be even more irresistible temptations.

The Sikhs were destined to rule Kashmir for only a few short years. The British merely awaited the death of Ranjit Singh to annex the rich and productive lands of the Punjab and dissolve the Khalsa. As W.G. Osborne, military secretary to Lord Auckland, wrote in 1840:

> The East India Company have swallowed too many camels to strain at this gnat; and to judge from the appearances of the country, they will derive

more nourishment from the smaller insect than they have done from many of the larger quadrupeds they have swallowed of late years; at all events, their throats will be well oiled by the rapidly increasing revenue.[1]

Osborne was not alone in his expectations. Those in the seats of power were determined to see his prophecies fulfilled. Both Lord Hardinge, the Governor General, and Sir John Hobhouse, the president of the Board of Control, envisaged the annexation of Punjab. Hobhouse's chief concern after the murder of Maharaja Nao Nihal Singh, was that Sher Singh, the new ruler, would be too tractable. 'With Nao Nehal Singh,' he wrote, 'we should, doubtless, have had a very pretty quarrel, as it stood, and I shall regret his death, if his successor is less disposed to quarrel with us than Nao Nehal Singh.'[2]

Despite the anarchy that spread throughout the Sikh dominions, the British might still have been frustrated in their designs were it not for the presence of an ally in the Sikh camp, i.e. Gulab Singh was a direct descendant of the Hindu raja, Dhrou Deu, who first established the Dogra family as rulers of Jammu in the declining years of the Mughal empire. With the growth of Sikh power in the early years of the nineteenth century, Ranjit Singh's aspirations soon included Jammu, and in 1808 General Hukam Singh conquered this hilly tract for his master in Lahore. Although he had been one of the staunchest opponents of the invaders, Gulab Singh was realistic enough to discern that the Sikhs were, at least for the time being, a force to reckon with. Therefore, along with his two brothers, Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh, he concluded that the way to rebuild the family fortunes was not by opposition of the overwhelming Sikh preponderance, but by becoming the Lahore government's loyal servant.

In 1809, Gulab Singh joined Ranjit Singh's army. He soon distinguished himself, especially at the siege of Multan in 1819 and in the subjugation of the bandit chief, Mian Dedo, who controlled the hills around Jammu. Gulab Singh's fortunes rose rapidly. In 1820, he was awarded a *jagir* (estate) worth Rs. 40,000 annually near Jammu. Soon he was allowed an army of his own, and in 1822, as a reward for his services in the conquest of Kishtwar and the subjugation of Rajouri, he was made hereditary Raja of Jammu, with an annual allowance of three lakhs[3] of rupees.

Meanwhile Gulab Singh's two brothers had not been idle. They were also made Rajas by Ranjit Singh. Suchet acquired Samba and Ramnagar with an annual allowance of a lakh of rupees. Dhyan

received Bhimber and Kassouli with a yearly income of one and a half lakhs of rupees. During the later years of Ranjit Singh's reign, Dhyan Singh ranked so high in the old man's esteem and affections that he became the virtual regent of the Sikh state. Thus, within twenty years of the Sikh conquest of Jammu, the Dogra brothers, as they were known, had reached a position of eminence far greater than that which they enjoyed prior to 1808—albeit they owed their success to Ranjit Singh's patronage.

Claude Wade, the British agent deputed to the Court at Lahore, found the Dogra brothers a pernicious influence. His fears were largely motivated by the possibility of a diminution of British influence on the Sikh government; nevertheless he gave a revealing view of their ascendant position:

> They owe their present position in the councils of their master to the personal favour and protection of His Majesty and have lost no opportunity of using it to augment and strengthen their power. Aware that there is not community of interests or good feeling between themselves and the Sikhs, they employ none but the Dogras and other tribes of the mountains to manage and defend their country in the hills. They hold immense tracts of territory also in the plains, besides the monopoly of the salt mines, and by means of arming the transit duties, from the Satlej to Peshawar have their offices in all the principal towns and exercise more or less of influence or interference in every department of the government.[4]

From the first, Gulab Singh hoped to create an empire ostensibly for Ranjit Singh, but which would eventually fall to him as the presumed survivor of the Sikh collapse. Claude Wade thought Gulab Singh might seize the whole of Punjab upon his patron's death. He was sure that he would absorb Kashmir. 'There is little doubt,' Wade wrote, 'that they [the Dogras] would attempt to seize Kashmir which they have now almost surrounded.'[5] Gulab Singh found himself in this happy position through the conquest of Ladakh, which had been accomplished with Ranjit Singh's blessing in 1834. Thus, at the time of the old Maharaja's death, Gulab Singh held territory, essentially in his own name, to the south (Jammu) and the east (Ladakh) of Kashmir itself.

When in 1845, relations between the Sikhs and the East India Company finally reached the flashpoint and exploded into hostilities, Gulab Singh ingratiated himself with the British as an intermediary. During the course of hostilities, he assumed virtual control of the

Lahore government and by February 1846, Hardinge was able to write to the Court of Directors:

> The first step taken by Rajah Goolab Singh has been to send a private emissary to Major Broadfoot as Agent for the Frontier, with general professions of his adherence to the British interests, and his desire to co-operate with them in the promotion of the objects they may have in view. I have little doubt (the Governor General perceptively concluded) that the object of Goolab Singh is now to make the Sikh Government and soldiery put themselves entirely into his hands—that he may then more effectively secure his own interest…[6]

Nevertheless, Hardinge assured Gulab Singh when they met face-to-face:

> …that I recognised the wisdom, prudence and good feeling evinced by him in having kept himself separate from the unjustifiable hostilities of the Sikhs, and that I was prepared to mark my sense of that conduct in the proceedings which must not be carried through…[7]

Good as his word, Hardinge saw to it that Article XII of the Treaty of Lahore, which was signed on 9 March 1846, and which reduced the Sikh state to the status of a tributary of the East India Company, guaranteed the recognition of Gulab Singh as an independent ruler by both the Lahore and British governments. The achievement of this end was facilitated by the inability of the Sikhs to pay the full one and a half crores[8] of rupees indemnity assessed by the East India Company. Consequently the Lahore authorities were forced to cede to the British the territories between the Beas and Indus rivers including Kashmir and Hazara.[9] The East India Company, in turn, transferred these areas to Gulab Singh for a crore of rupees; later reduced to seventy-five lakhs with the British occupation of Kulu and Mandi.[10]

This arrangement was mutually advantageous for the East India Company and the Dogras. At last Gulab Singh saw the fulfilment of his ambition for an independent Dogra state, and the British, for their part, were able to quietly conclude what might have been a most difficult war. They had little desire to involve themselves in a demanding and expensive campaign beyond the plains of India. Moreover, the East India Company made a sizeable pecuniary profit in the bargain.

A week after the conclusion of negotiations at Lahore, the Treaty of Amritsar signed by Gulab Singh and the British government formalized

their relationship in greater detail. The Dogra position *vis-à-vis* the British raj, was more favourable than that of most princely states. The East India Company did not guarantee the internal security of the state, and thus could not interfere in its affairs freely. Article VI of the treaty, however, stipulated that Gulab Singh and his heirs were bound to aid British troops in the hills and adjacent territory, and Article X provided for the subordination of the new state to British India in virtue of which the Maharaja would annually furnish the British Crown with 'one horse, twelve perfect shawl goats of approved breed (six male and six female), and three pairs of Kashmir shawls.'[11] Gulab Singh and his heirs were, in return, 'guaranteed all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated east of the River Indus and west of the River Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahal.'[12]

Hardinge explained his reasons for concluding the Treaty of Amritsar and of establishing Gulab Singh in Kashmir in the following terms:

> ...Its [Kashmir's] occupation by us would on many accounts be disadvantageous—It would bring us into collision with many powerful chiefs for whose coercion a large Military Establishment at a great distance from our Provinces and Military resources would be necessary. It would more than double the extent of our present frontier in Countries assailable at every point and most difficult to defend without any corresponding advantage for such large additions of territory—new distant and conflicting interests would be created—and races of people with whom we have hitherto had no intercourse would be brought under our rule—while the Territories, excepting Cashmere, are comparatively unproductive and would scarcely pay the expenses of occupation and management...

Furthermore, the Governor General contended, the rewarding of Gulab Singh would:

> ...shew forth, as an example to the other Chiefs of Asia, the benefits which accrue from an adherence to British interests...[and] create a strong and friendly power in a position to threaten and attack, should it be necessary to do so, the Lahore Territories in their most vulnerable point, and at the same time to secure to ourselves that indemnification for the expenses of the campaign, which we declared our determination to exact, and which excepting by the cession of Territory the Lahore Government is not in a condition to afford...[13]

A few days later, Hardinge expanded on his reasons for establishing Gulab Singh as ruler of Kashmir. 'As it was of the utmost importance to weaken the Sikh nation before its government should be re-established,' he wrote.

> I considered the appropriation of the ceded territory to be the most expedient measure I could devise for that purpose, by which a Rajpoot Dynasty will act as counterpoise against the power of a Sikh Prince, the son of the late Ranjeet Sing, and both will have a common interest in resisting attempts on the part of any Mahomedan power to establish an independent State on this side of the Indus or even to occupy Peshawar…[14]

What had been prescribed on paper still had to be implemented in the field, and Gulab Singh had yet to dispose of the Sikh regime's governor of Kashmir, Sheikh Imamuddin, who was unwilling to surrender the province—a reluctance at least partially rooted in a Sikh animosity towards Gulab Singh so great that some of the Sirdars were willing to risk a final confrontation with the British in order to frustrate their Dogra enemy's ambitions. On 25 July 1846, Purun Chand, the *vakil* (emissary) of the governor at the court of Lahore, had conveyed to his master a message apparently from Lal Singh, the diminished Khalsa's chief minister:

> My Friend (read the letter) you are not ignorant of the ingratitude and want of faith which Raja Golab Singh has exhibited towards the Lahore Sirkar—It is indeed sufficiently glaring—I now write therefore to request, my friend, that you will not set before our eyes the example of your late Father's former intercourse with the aforesaid Rajah; but consider both your duty and your interest to lie this way; and inflict such injury and chastisement upon the said Rajah that he shall have reason to remember it. It is to be hoped that if the Rajah makes but one false step, he will never be able to establish himself again. For your security and confidence, my friend, I have sent you a separate written guarantee, that you may have no misgivings as to the consequences…[15]
>
> I hereby promise, (the guarantee stated) that if my friend, Sheikh Imamoodeen Khan Bahadoor with good will and fidelity to his proper Masters duly performs the task imposed upon him in a separate letter, my whole interest shall be exerted to secure him from being called to account by the British Government. Whatever allowance either he, or his Jageerdare horsemen, or the Sheikh his late father, received from the Lahore Government, the Jageers and something added to them as a reward for

service shall be assigned him in the Lahore territory. By the Grace of God I will not fail to fulfil this that I have written.[16]

'Tear up this paper when you have read it,' Sheikh Imamuddin's correspondent urged in conclusion—a piece of useful advice which Imamuddin clearly failed to heed!

Sheikh Imamuddin appeared an unlikely figure to lead a rebellion. He was described by Captain Arthur Broome, a British officer in Kashmir, 'as very debauched, strongly addicted to women and drunk almost every night.'[17]

Nevertheless he acted with dispatch. Not only did he refuse to turn over the reins of government to Gulab Singh, but also moved against the Dogra contingent sent to occupy the valley, and killed the commander, Vizier Lukput Rae in the bargain. Gulab Singh had long before concluded an agreement with Imamuddin's predecessor and father, Sheikh Mohiuddin, and he fully expected the son to continue to honour his father's commitment to support the new Maharaja. Based on this misapprehension, Gulab Singh had sent a few thousand troops and two guns under the command of the unfortunate Lukput Rae to consolidate his position. At first Imamuddin had apparently co-operated with the new arrivals. The Dogra forces were allowed to occupy Hari Parbat, the fortress that dominated Srinagar, and according to Sheikh Imamuddin's subsequent testimony, other positions throughout the vale.

Even Hardinge in his report to the secret committee was unable to explain the ensuing consequences. But the fact remained that Gulab Singh ordered Sheikh Imamuddin to leave Kashmir and at the same time, dispatched reinforcements under Vizier Rutnu to Srinagar. Imamuddin constantly delayed his departure on the pretext of collecting revenues still due him while the Lahore durbar, under pressure from Gulab Singh and the British, sent official remonstrance and orders for immediate evacuation. The accounts, the correspondence claimed, would be reconciled in Lahore.

When the hostilities broke out in Srinagar, the Lahore durbar sent representatives to Kashmir to induce Sheikh Imamuddin to leave. On the other hand, the Dogra reinforcements were delayed for so long *en route*, on the orders of Lal Singh it was later claimed, that they did not arrive in Srinagar until after the commencement of the fighting. The seeming hypocrisy of the Sikhs was subsequently explained by British officers who had been in the area as an indication of the 'covert

connivance of Raja Lal Singh and other influential parties at Lahore' against Gulab Singh, a policy of which the Lahore durbar, as a whole, was unaware and in the formulation of which it was uninvolved.[18]

Sheikh Imamuddin's procrastination would not have been hard to understand even if there had been no letters from Lahore. Sheikh Mohiuddin was a self-made man who had started life as a shoemaker and had risen to fortune as a Dogra client. Seven years previously, under the sponsorship of Gulab Singh, he had been appointed governor of Kashmir by the Sikhs, while his son, Imamuddin, had been placed in charge of Jullundur. Mohiuddin had been instructed to collect twenty lakhs of rupees annually on behalf of Lahore. Of this amount he was to retain six lakhs for the maintenance of troops and administrative expenses, etc. In fact, he never delivered more than six lakhs in any one year, and part of this amount had always been conveyed in the form of shawl wool goats. Imamuddin followed a similar policy in Jullundur. Hardinge claimed that the profits were in both cases divided with Gulab Singh but that it was hard to determine the details, no account having been made available to Lahore in the seven years Mohiuddin was governor of Kashmir. There was no doubt, however, Hardinge contended, that the two chiefs had secreted upwards of a crore of rupees before the recent conflict between the British and the Sikhs.[19]

Nevertheless, Sheikh Imamuddin's actions puzzled Hardinge. Sheikh Imamuddin was very wealthy and held a *jagir*, with British approval, at Jullundur. He could not have expected to maintain himself for very long in Kashmir against the combined forces of the Sikhs, the Dogras and the British arrayed against him. Hardinge conjectured that there was great wealth in Kashmir which Gulab Singh coveted and which Sheikh Imamuddin was anxious to remove. Yet, the Governor General found Imamuddin's course a desperate one. The latter must have been aware that the Lahore durbar would eventually demand a financial reckoning. Moreover, his funds would soon be exhausted by the large force he was said to be collecting and his *jagir* in Jullundur, and his other property would be attached.[20]

Gulab Singh's conduct seemed equally strange to the Governor General. In April he could have taken Kashmir without opposition and yet he chose to send only a few battalions under Lukput Rae and to work through Sheikh Imamuddin. But, Hardinge concluded philosophically,

> ...Gulab Singh is a man of such unfathomable craft and shrewdness where his interests are concerned that those who know his character are not without suspicions of his having allowed matters to take their present course, purposely, for the furtherance of some ulterior motive of his own.[21]

Hardinge was convinced that the situation had to be cleared up quickly. The longer Sheikh Imamuddin was able to hold out, the more inclined the Muslim hill Rajas, the Hazaras and the chiefs of all the western districts would be to join him, in fact he had already gained some adherents to his cause. The weather would favour the rebels and in November the passes would close, trapping whatever troops happened to be in Kashmir until the spring. The Governor General pointed out that the Sikhs were obliged by Article IV of the Lahore Treaty to hand over Kashmir to the British and they had not fulfilled their undertaking. Gulab Singh, for his part, was bound to take all proper means for assuming possession of the districts transferred to him by the British, which he had not done so. On the other hand, Hardinge could not help but remember that Gulab Singh had paid for but had not received Kashmir and that his vizier had been killed by the rebel Sheikh Imamuddin. In an attempt to force the issue, Hardinge sent Lieutenant Colonel Henry Lawrence to Jammu with orders to urge Gulab Singh to march on to Kashmir. The Lahore durbar was instructed to make officers and men available to support the effort.[22]

Gulab Singh was, however, determined to prevent any direct British presence in Kashmir itself.[23] Because he was afraid he would have to pay for the East India Company's forces, he did not want the British to protect his rear—a desire in perfect keeping with British policy. As a consequence, Brigadier Wheeler was sent with part of the Jullundur force to Jammu.[24]

What the British most feared was a tribal uprising. Henry Lawrence wrote to Gulab Singh cajoling him to: 'convince the Rajahs, Chiefs and People of Kohistan that you will forget past offences and judge them by their future conduct, satisfy them for their safety, honour any reasonable hopes of livelihood, and you may rely on the majority joining your standard, but desperate men will fight to extremity'.[25]

He also urged the maharaja to act with some haste:

> You must, however, exert yourself *at once* and put forth all your strength, for there is not much time to spare before the snow falls; and every day

you allow Sheik Imamoodeen to remain in Cashmere will be a reflection on yourself.[26]

As the situation appeared at the beginning of October, Sheikh Imamuddin's forces numbered between 12,000 and 20,000 regulars and irregulars with twenty-five guns ranging from six pounders on downwards. A British force of some three regiments was in Jammu and Gulab Singh still had 4,000 men in the Hari Parbat fortress. But the maharaja mounted his campaign to defeat Sheikh Imamuddin with little enthusiasm. The subsequent days saw the British authorities becoming increasingly anxious to conclude the transfer of Kashmir to Gulab Singh without themselves becoming seriously involved. Intensifying pressure was placed on the maharaja and the Sikhs.[27] But in regard to the latter, John Lawrence wrote to his brother that there was much sympathy for Sheikh Imamuddin in the Lahore durbar and that the Sikhs would limit their commitment to the minimum necessary to satisfy the British. In general, Lahore felt that Sheikh Imamuddin would capitulate, to which Henry Lawrence responded: '…on the principle that a nigger usually does exactly the opposite to what he may reasonably be expected to do, maybe he will…'.[28]

Henry Lawrence's words were prophetic. On 23 October, Hardinge was able to report that Sheikh Imamuddin had lifted the siege of the Dogras still holding out in Hari Parbat. He was leaving Kashmir and would surrender himself to Lieutenant Herbert Edwardes, the British officer accompanying Gulab Singh's slowly advancing forces. In fairness to Imamuddin, Hardinge reported that Sheikh Imamuddin had apparently made no plans to oppose Gulab Singh's advance and had not even intended to defend the passes against the approaching army. A month later the Governor General reported that all of Kashmir was in Gulab Singh's hands.[29]

After his departure from Kashmir, Sheikh Imamuddin met Edwardes at Jammu and proceeded with him to the camp of Henry Lawrence, now the Governor General's agent for the affairs of the Punjab. There on 1 November, he presented Henry Lawrence with three documents purporting to be letters from Lal Singh. The background to this confrontation dated back to 25 September when Sheikh Imamuddin's *vakil*, Purun Chand, had visited Edwardes and had informed him that his master had in his possession a letter from Raja Lal Singh ordering him to resist Gulab Singh.[30]

On 1 October, John Lawrence in Lahore acting for his brother, had written to Sheikh Imamuddin to remind him that he had often promised to leave Kashmir and had in fact never done so. As he had disobeyed the orders of the British government, his *jagir* in Jullundur had been forfeited, but that he could leave Kashmir with his property if he he was able to prove the validity of Purun Chand's assertion.[31]

Two days later Edwardes wrote to Henry Lawrence that he had repeated John Lawrence's guarantee, adding a commitment that Sheikh Imamuddin's family would be released from custody and that the British would not allow Lahore to demand a financial accountability.[32]

Hardinge had minuted: 'I think Mr. Edwardes a little too active. He should not have promised so much to a rebel chief.'[33] Some days later Sir Frederick Currie, the secretary to the foreign department of the government of India, reiterated the Governor General's argument more forcefully:

> ...if it shall be proved that the Durbar has behaved treacherously, they may deserve being visited by the displeasure of the British Government—but it would be an irregular and questionable mode of punishing them, to make them forego a just claim against an unjust servant.
>
> As before stated, the Governor General will do all in his power to redeem the promise which has been made by your authority to Sheik Imamoodeen—should he establish the facts—the proof of which is the condition of the promise—but His Lordship is desirous to explain to you his view of the subject...and to show you how greatly you have mistaken his instructions in supposing he authorized the promise being made.[34]

The acquisition of these letters, whose authenticity was yet to be determined, provided the British with both problems and opportunities. To what extent had the actions of Lal Singh, the chief figure in the Lahore durbar and the paramour of Rani Jindan, the regent for the minor Maharaja Dalip Singh, involved and compromised the whole durbar?

Regardless of the facts, if the letters proved to be genuine, the British were in a position to use any interpretation they wished. The Governor General felt that the durbar should in no event be held responsible as he was pleased with its general conduct in regard to Kashmir.[35] Lal Singh, if found guilty, should be exiled and Rani Jindan could be deposed. The secret committee agreed that Lal Singh should be removed from office if it were determined that he had indeed written the letters to Sheikh Imamuddin:

> But we do not consider that you are compelled to wait for any discovery of that nature in order to reconcile yourself to the assumption of power in the Punjab, conceiving as we do, that course to be called for by every consideration of sound policy and safety to the Empire.[36]

The East India Company rarely countenanced and certainly never encouraged the acquisition of additional territory in India. But for as lucrative an asset as the rich Punjab, it was willing to make an exception. In December 1847, the hearing on the conduct of Lal Singh and his relationship with Sheikh Imamuddin took place in Lahore, with all the pomp Henry Lawrence and Sir Frederick Currie, the other hearing officer, could muster to impress their Sikh hosts. Hardinge reported the findings to the secret committee:

> …Your Honourable Committee will observe that altho' [sic] judicial proof of the authenticity of the signature attachment to the Letters Nos. 2 and 3 of the Minutes of Proceedings, could not be addressed to the satisfaction of the Commission, the presumptive proof of their genuineness was so strong as to lead to the conviction that they were written by the sirdars and did contain the instructions of Raja Lal Singh…[37]

The Sikh sirdars unanimously approved of the decision and agreed to the propriety of Lal Singh being removed from office and exiled to Ferozepur.[38]

The East India Company was not to limit its actions to the removal of Lal Singh. It seized the opportunity to erode the weakened Khalsa's independence still further. Henry Lawrence reported that of the sirdars, there was, 'Not one who did not prefer British protection to a short-lived, anarchical independence.'[39] And pressure was placed on the young Maharaja's government to invite a more permanent British presence in Lahore than had been provided for in the Treaty of Lahore. Currie wrote:

> …The recent instances in which the co-operation and advice of the British officers under His Lordship's orders have been excited so beneficially for the interests of Your Highness' Government in the amicable settlement of disputed claims and embarrassing cases must be sufficient proof and evidence to Your Highness of the motives by which the Governor General is actuated, and which were fully explained to Your Highness' Durbar and the assembled chiefs in March last on the occasion of the ratifying of the Treaty of Lahore…[40]

A revision of the Treaty of Lahore on 16 December brought Punjab under more effective British control. The Lahore administration was transferred to a Council of Regency made up of eight Sikh sirdars acting under the strict supervision of the British resident. A British force was to be maintained at Lahore for the support of which Lahore was to pay twenty-two lakh rupees annually. These new conditions were to prevail until the Maharaja attained his majority on 4 September 1854 or for as long as the Governor General and the Lahore durbar might think desirable. But the amendment of the new arrangement was never to become a matter of issue. The Second Anglo-Sikh War and the ensuing defeat of the Khalsa forces presaged the snuffing out of Sikh independence on 30 March 1849.

Even before Gulab Singh had firmly established himself in Kashmir, the British had been anxious to accurately determine the boundaries of the new state; it was a matter of some importance. The eastern boundaries of the Dogra dominions had not, for instance, been defined by the arrangements which concluded the Sikh war. And Henry Lawrence thought that the border, in this direction, should be drawn so far eastward so as to be out of Gulab Singh's influence, so that the traders of Jammu could not turn the British flank north eastward.[41]

The British were happy enough to establish a client buffer between themselves and the politically unstable reaches of Central Asia, but they were reluctant to forego the advantages of diverting trade, that normally flowed into Kashmir, away from its traditional course and directly into British territory. The East India Company had been trying to achieve this end since at least 1815, when a factory had been established at Kotgarh on the Sutlej to break the Kashmir and Ladakh monopoly of the lucrative shawl wool traffic that originated on the plains of Western Tibet, and ended on the looms of Srinagar.[42]

The Sikh conquest of Kashmir and the ensuing famine drove many of the Kashmiri weavers into British India, and the East India Company redoubled its efforts to gain direct access to Tibetan products. It tried to use Sikkim as a route and worked through protected native states along the Tibetan border to influence Tibetan and Chinese authorities. These officials were reluctant to export to new markets and staunchly resisted British overtures. However, Gulab Singh's invasion of Ladakh had the desired effect. And, between 1837 and 1840 shawl wool imports into British territory and that of protected states such as Bashahr, increased by 200 per cent while other products including salt and borax, were also diverted from their usual route. That Gulab Singh

had no real intention of quietly acquiescing to the British policy was made obvious by his abortive invasion of western Tibet in 1841, an attempt to secure the source of the shawl wool for himself. Although the Tibetans and the Chinese finally frustrated the Jammu raja in his aim, he was nevertheless able to prevent the East India Company from significantly interfering with the customary course of the shawl wool from western Tibet to Kashmir. In fact, in the peace treaty concluded between the Dogras and Tibetans, the latter pledged themselves to, 'carry on the trade in wool, shawl and tea in accordance with old customs, via Ladakh year by year.' As the treaty between Gulab Singh and the Lhasa government did not bind the former's suzerain, a supplementary treaty with similar provisions was concluded between the Lahore durbar and Lhasa.[43]

Despite the two treaties, Hardinge was determined to continue his efforts to capture some of the Tibetan trade for Bashahr and the northern provinces of British India. Furthermore, he deputed Captain James Abbott, an artillery officer, to define the limits of the Sikh state in the plains, the Dogra holdings in the hills, and the East India Company's possessions. 'It is advisable so far as possible,' Henry Lawrence reiterated on behalf of the Governor General, 'to obtain such a Geographical boundary on the North and North East as will prevent Maharaja Golab Singh's possessions turning the flank of the British territories…'.[44]

To the east, Hardinge sent Mr Vans Agnew and Captain A. Cunningham, 'to lay down the boundary of the North West extremity of our New Hill possession, where they adjoin the Maharaja Golab Singh's district of Ladak and the Chinese Territories at Lhassa.'[45] The Governor General ordered the two officials to proceed to the Spiti Valley immediately to avoid the snow that would soon clog the intervening passes. He hoped to open communications with the Chinese frontier at Lhasa so that there might be a route that ran straight from British territory to Chinese Tartary unobstructed by transit duties.[46] The specific orders to Cunningham read as follows:

> … I have the honour to request that you will proceed at your earliest convenience to the point where the Ladakh-Koolloo and Chinese Tartary boundaries meet, whence working backwards you will in conjunction with Mr P. Vans Agnew lay down and map the boundary between the Territory of Maharajah Golab Singh and the British Government. You will understand that Lahoul of Koolloo is ours, and Lahoul of Chamba and

Ladakh is the Maharajah's. The whole of Spiti will I conceive come, according to the terms of the Treaty, within the British boundary, but you are requested to limit yourself to such demarcation as will give you a clear and well-defined boundary, and will prevent the possibility of dispute. To effect this object, you are at liberty to resign a portion of Spiti and even Lahoul, but you are on no account to encroach on the Ladakh frontier. I request you will remember that it is our object to prevent the Jammoo Troops, Traders or People turning our flank to the North Eastward. The boundary line must therefore run Eastward to such point of Territory, as is clearly beyond the Maharajah's influence, both the Jummoo and Thibet authorities must be distinctly informed that no encroachment by any party on any pretence will be permitted.[47]

2. Keeping the above objects in view and avoiding as much as possible all cause of offence to Maharaja Golab Snigh [sic] and his people, or to the Chinese Authorities, you will quietly and unostentatiously make enquiries as to the lines of trade between Central Asia and the Punjab and you will explain to any Chinese or Thibet authorities that you may fall in with, as also to any traders you meet, that no duty will be levied on Shawl Wool or other Commodities that may be brought by them into the British Territory. No engagements need be entered into by you with any parties regarding trade which will soon find its way where best protected and least taxed.

Henry Lawrence continued to inform Cunningham that Gulab Singh had been ordered to depute two qualified men to accompany the party and to send agents to Leh to meet them. If any dispute over the Kashmir boundary arose, the line most favourable to Gulab Singh should be followed.[48] Lawrence wrote to Agnew in a similar vein. 'Bear in mind,' he emphasized, 'that it is not a strip more or less of barren or even productive territory we want, but a clear and well-defined boundary in a quarter likely to come little under observation.'

Lawrence realized that the commissioners could not accomplish much in what remained of the year 1846. They were not to leave India to assume their duties until 3 August, and then the snows would not be far behind them. It was consequently decided that they should spend winter in the field and early in the next season commence the task of mapping the entire length of Gulab Singh's borders. Lawrence again stressed the need of attracting trade into British hands. Agnew was to point out to the Tibetan and Chinese authorities not only that Lahore's rights in regard to Ladakh had been made over to the British, but also that traders entering British territory would not be taxed in any way and would receive the full protection of the British Raj.[49] A letter from Hardinge to Lhasa made the Indian government's purpose clear:

> ...As by the 4th article of the Treaty with the Government of Lahore, the entire rights and interests of the Durbar in the Territory now ceded to Maharaja Goolab Sing were transferred to the British Government. I have deemed it expedient that certain portions of the Treaty between the Chinese authorities and those of Lahore should be cancelled as they were in their nature highly injurious to the interests of the British Government and its Dependencies...[50]

Hardinge thus unilaterally amended the second article of the Lahore–Lhasa supplementary treaty of 1842 in the hope of assuring British traders free entrance to markets in Chinese territory (Tibet).[51]

Of course, Gulab Singh was far from pleased with the British proposals, and the Chinese were not enthusiastic as well. Nevertheless, Hardinge requested Her Majesty's plenipotentiary in Hong Kong, Sir John Davis, to inform Peking of the Governor General's communications with Lhasa and to request a joint demarcation of the Chinese borders with Kashmir and British India.[52] Davis was confident of achieving success. He modestly implied that his vast experience in China had giveen him command of almost any situation,[53] and he confidently wrote to K'e-ying, the high imperial commissioner at Canton, to convey the Governor General's wishes. '...The territory of Cashmere conferred on Golab Singh,' he explained, 'having carried on a beneficial commerce with Thibet, His Lordship justly expects that the same intercourse should be possessed by the British Territory.'[54] Davis was soon to realize that he had no answer to the exquisite skill of the Chinese in the art of interminable delay. On 13 January, K'e-ying addressed a particularly frustrating letter to the plenipotentiary. In it he referred to the Treaty of Nanking and the supplementary treaty thereto:

> ...You now request to have commercial intercourse with Thibet, which would be establishing a port besides those five ports in opposition to the provisions of both treaties.
>
> Respecting the frontiers—I beg to remark, that the borders of those territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed, so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement, and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them.[55]

In some desperation, Davis replied:

> ...With regard to the frontiers, it surely was not to affix any new boundaries, but merely to ascertain the old ones that Commissioners were sent to Lhassa. The Government-General expressly declares his wish that the 'Exact limits of the Thibetan frontier may be pointed out with the view of preventing any Encroachment.'
>
> The Viceroy of Lhassa will doubtless be more willing to make known these ancient limits, than to incur the chances of future misunderstanding by leaving the point uncertain...
>
> With regard to the second point of Trade, Cashmere has always had a commerce with Thibet, and therefore, nothing new is proposed in the continuance of this Trade—Both Thibet and Cashmere with the other territories in question, are foreign dependencies—the former of China, the latter of Great Britain. They adjoin each other, and are not separated by wide areas. The Merchants of Cashmere and the Northern Frontiers of India are very different from the English merchants who come to China. And they carry on a very different trade. What connection can they have with a Treaty of Maritime commerce from England to the five Ports of China, to be carried on in Ships?[56]

During the autumn of 1846, Cunningham and Agnew had partially defined the border between Kashmir and British India. As soon as the passes opened in 1847, the British mission, now consisting of Cunningham, Lieutenant H. Strachey and Dr T. Thomson, commenced their march to Tibet's western border in order to determine the boundary between the territories of the emperor of China and those of Gulab Singh.

In his orders, Hardinge reiterated his determination to lure as much of the trade passing through Ladakh into Kashmir southward into British territory as was possible. He was anxious that the road to Yarkand, which had formerly been open, should once more be made accessible and that the commissioners during their journey, which was to take no more than two years, should become thoroughly familiar with the entire region. In conclusion, the Governor General was, 'persuaded that in whatever circumstances they are placed, and whatever difficulties and privations they may have to undergo, they will maintain unimpaired the credit and dignity of the British character.'[57]

Under considerable pressure, the Chinese officials, well aware of the Middle Kingdom's intrinsic weakness, continued to protect their country's position and to avoid delimitation or demarcation of its

western borders by a policy of evasion and procrastination. Driven to despair, the formerly composed Davis complained to Hardinge,

> ...if K'e-ying will only transmit to Peking something like a true statement of the case, it may tend materially to correct and neutralize the evil tendencies of any misrepresentation from the Tibetan Viceroy.[58]

With the British commissioners already on the way to the Tibetan frontier, Davis demanded that K'e-ying permit him to communicate directly with Peking,[59] but the high imperial commissioner would only promise that he would, 'faithfully submit to the Emperor the whole tenor of the last despatch (sic) of the Honourable (sic) Envoy.' However, the actual investigation of the situation was a matter for the commissioner in Tibet, who was unfortunately a great distance away.[60]

In August, K'e-ying finally intimated that the Chinese were willing to send a delegation to cooperate with the British in the demarcation of Tibet's western frontier.[61] Of course, when the British commissioners arrived at the border at the end of August, not only were there no Chinese officials awaiting them, but they were met by active hostility from the Tibetans. Davis, prompted by Hardinge, nevertheless continued in his efforts to gain the cooperation of the Chinese. As late as January 1848, K'e-ying was able to write, no doubt with some secret pleasure, '...Having now received your last Despatch I shall again submit the matter to the Throne that our great Minister in Thibet may be ordered to arrange the matter properly.'[63] Meanwhile, the commissioners were to explore the border region on their own initiative. Henry Lawrence wrote to Cunningham:

> ...Boundary marks are neither requisite nor probably possible; you will find plenty of mountains ready to your hand. And their natural pillars should not only be carefully mapped for registry with the British Government, but their appearance and bearings should be fully and distinctly recorded in writing...As soon as you are threatened with snow, you will retire down the river Indus, surveying it as fully as possible, but at any rate, fixing points down its whole line as far as the junction with the Gilghit river, from which points Mr. Vans Agnew has been instructed to explore its downward course...

Once it was reported that the mission had arrived in Gilgit, it would be ascertained whether it should continue its investigations to Hunza, Nagar and the Karakorams, 'which would seem to form the natural

boundary sought.' Although the expansion of British Indian trade with Chinese territory was one objective, the definition of the boundary was the commissioners' prime duty. Two agents deputed by Gulab Singh were to join the mission in the performance of its duties. Where Cunningham was to return to the Punjab from the Karakorams via the Hazara country, Strachey, was at first to follow Cunningham's path but then turn eastward and if possible, penetrate Tibet as far as Manasorawar Lake and Lhasa. He was to return to British territory via Bhutan or Darjeeling. Dr Thomson was to determine the mineral resources along the British frontier.[64]

Again, the commissioners commenced their journey too late. Cunningham was forced to spend the winter of 1847 in Kashmir, where John Lawrence remarked, his researches although interesting, seemed rather 'out of his present line of work'[65] Strachey advanced no further than Leh, from where he informed his superior, Sir Frederick Currie, that the Tibetans did not recognize the Dogra rule of Tibet but still acknowledged only the authority of the deposed gyalpo of Leh. They failed to admit that a treaty had ever been negotiated between them and the Dogras on the one hand and the Sikhs on the other:[66]

> ...The observance of its provisions to this day arises from the fact of its being nothing more than a confirmation, without a single alteration, of the arrangements formerly subsisting between the two Tibetan States of Tsang and Ladakh: The Lhassa Government will keep to these arrangements from systematic adherence to old custom, good faith, regard to their brother Tibetans in Ladakh, and self-interest which they imagine to be consulted by some of the provisions.[67]

Agnew, for his part, reached Gilgit and while awaiting invitations from the rulers of Hunza and Nagar, recorded his observations in a diary. Gilgit, he reported, contained some one thousand houses now, compared to the six or seven thousand that it had previously contained, prior to a recent wave of unrest and anarchy. Hunza, by all accounts, did not exceed two thousand houses but its raja, Ghazanfur, was notorious for audacious daring. He was said to have caused the demise of nine rajas of Nagar in order to prevent the absorption of Hunza by its more populous neighbour. He frequently raided the Sirikol Valley as far as Yarkand, undeterred by the Chinese administration in Turkestan.[68] A few days later Agnew, not having received letters in the expected tone, rather angrily noted that, 'it was pretty clear that they [the rulers of Hunza and Nagar] had been pretending civility so long

as they feared I was backed by force.' As a matter of fact, both states were alarmed by Agnew's visit. Hunza, in addition, apparently felt that the British had been guilty of subterfuge in allowing Ahmed Shah of Baltistan (with whom Ghazanfur contended the East India Company had concluded a treaty of alliance through Mr G.T. Vigne) to be destroyed by Gulab Singh.

Increasingly angered, Agnew denied this assertion as an impertinence, Ahmed Shah, he contended, had never been admitted into an alliance with the East India Company.[69] On 3 September, Agnew made one last blustery attempt to be admitted to Hunza and Nagar. He accused the latter of being the cat's paw of the former and threatened not to intercede on Nagar's behalf with its new suzerain, Maharaja Gulab Singh. From the ruler of Hunza he demanded the immediate deputing of an intelligent *vakil* 'unless he wished me to forward to my Government the common report that he was the greatest robber in these parts.'[70] It was all to no avail. In a final petulant entry in his diary, Agnew stated:

> ...In reply to the Raja of Hunza, I wrote that, since it was evident he wished to have nothing to do with me, I had no further time to wait upon him. The decision was of his making—and I begged him to remember that come what might out of his new relations with Maharajah Golab Singh as he had declined the good officers of the Emissary of the Indian Government; that Government had nothing to say to it...with the Naggar people I wasted no more words...[71]

On 12 September, Agnew attempted one of the first descriptions by any British official of the virtually unknown lands at the extreme north of the subcontinent:

> ...Although the tract of country between the Indus and the Oxus covers much space on a map, it is hardly possible to conceive one more thinly inhabited—Hunza and Nuggur containing together some 7,000 houses are shut up in snowy hills with one outlet to Gilget—one for a few ways to Balti, and one (or two) into China—the country is doubtless a strong one, but I should think one regiment quite enough to take and keep it.

Agnew referred to the sparsely populated reaches of Gilgit, Yasin, Mastuj and Darel the rulers of which were, 'either most despotic tyrants or perfect cyphers in the hands of a party. The people are either trembling slaves constantly sold like dogs at the caprice of the Rajas

or insensate intriguers who vary, generally for the worse, the form of their slavery.' The tribes of the region seemed only to cooperate in keeping the roads up the Gilgit River to Badakshan and up the Hunza River into Turkestan closed. The region itself, although containing some minerals, was very poor. 'It is very difficult,' Agnew concluded,

> to form any conjecture of what will be the course of events among so barbarous a people in consequence of Maharajah Golab Sing[h]'s occupation of Gilgit...but it is not impossible that sooner or later, if not this winter, the neighbouring tribes may attempt to regain Gilgit from what they consider a foreign intruder.[72]

In his minutes, Hobhouse found Agrew's comments, 'very interesting.'

This wild region to the north of Kashmir itself, including such tribal satrapies as Gilgit, Hunza, Nagar, Chitral, Punyal, Chilas, Darel, Tangir and Gor, was a constant source of uncertainty to the British. The tenuous hold of Kashmir on the area had been established in 1841 when Gilgit petitioned the Sikh rulers of Kashmir for aid against the ambitious Gauhar Aman, chief of Yasin. Once established the Sikhs never left, and in 1845, they gained the allegiance of Hunza, Nagar and Yasin. The largely *pro forma* subservience of these unruly hill people was inherited by Gulab Singh, who from the first was involved in hostilities with them, which as often as not ended in at least temporary defeat of the Dogras. In 1848 and again in 1852, a coalition led by Gauhar Aman drove Gulab Singh's forces out of Gilgit. But in the long run, Kashmir, encouraged by the British quest for stability, steadily extended its jurisdiction (in 1851–52, for instance, Chilas was conquered); although the new acquisitions were more often sources of weakness than of strength.'[73]

Only where the boundaries of British India and the territory of Gulab Singh met, was the East India Company satisfied in its desires for a clearly defined and coherent Kashmir border and the establishment of conditions more conducive to increased trade. A three years' lease on the Spiti Valley was granted to the ruler of the hill state of Bashahr in 1846 with the intention of his retaining permanent control, but with the strong implication that to ensure this sought after situation, the Raja would have to abolish all transit duties in his state. 'By this step the road from the Ladakh frontier to the British territory will be free of all duties.'[74] Henry Lawrence reported that he had negotiated a territorial exchange with Gulab Singh in the Chumba region under the terms of which the river Ravi became the British boundary.[75] In

continued pursuit of the British determination to 'lay down a well-defined boundary so as to prevent all future dispute,'[76] Lawrence bartered Gulab Singh's Hazara territory for some land in the plains opposite Jammu.

Gulab Singh had entered Srinagar as a hero, a liberator of the people from the exactions of the rapacious Sheikh Imamuddin, but the fires of hope soon turned to ashes for the new Maharaja of Kashmir seemed even more wanton and demanding than his predecessor. The Governor General, however, informed London that Gulab Singh intended to control the price of grain, implement a programme of land reform, abolish female infanticide, remove internal duties, refrain from entering business himself and in general protect the people from extortion.[77] Captain Arthur Broome, who was actually with the Maharaja in Kashmir, was less optimistic. He found Gulab Singh greedy, sly, extremely cruel and unfair to his subordinates, whom he paid as rarely and as little as possible. Broome judged Gulab Singh's exactions would probably be still more severe if it were not for his fear of unfavourable reports reaching the Governor General. 'Although all give him credit for ability and courage,' Broome concluded, 'I believe that the reputation for the former was built for him by his Brother Dhyan Singh…'[78]

Hobhouse minuted on the bottom of Broome's letter: 'These reports of the character of Golab Singh are such as to promise ill for his subjects and for the arrangements made in Cashmere.'

A Colonel Steinbach, whom Lord Dalhousie, Hardinge's successor, later described as, 'a great pompous ass,'[79] but who had served as commander of some of Gulab Singh's troops, contended, in a letter written to Dalhousie in 1851, that the British had made a great mistake in turning Kashmir over to Gulab Singh. Not only had his military resources been exaggerated,

> …but of his avarice and pecuniary oppression your Lordship can form no correct conception—in fact, had your Lordship visited Cashmere, as fully expected, the entire population intended prostrating themselves at your Lordship's feet, to beg to be relieved from the Maharajah's rule—a fact upon my honour…

Steinbach could not understand how Englishmen who railed against slavery at home could at the same time turn an entire people into slaves. The Maharaja, according to Steinbach, was, with the exception

of five or six shawl merchants, the only trader in Kashmir. He owned everything. He confiscated ninety out of every one hundred *seers* (205.7 lb.), of grain from the cultivators which exaction he then sold to the populace. Half of the profit from the sale of shawl wool went to Gulab Singh.[80] The Maharaja denied his reputation for cruelty and rapacity. Although he had three freebooters flayed alive, he argued that the deed was necessary because the bandits had put to the sword one of his garrisons and then fed their remains to the dogs.[81]

The British always manifested considerable ambivalence towards Gulab Singh. They felt some guilt about having imposed him on the people of Kashmir, for they were well aware of his all too visible bad qualities. On the other hand, he had for some time been a loyal ally, and his usefulness would only be enhanced by his acquisition of Kashmir. Sir George Clerk, formerly the British agent at Lahore, thought the latter factor predominated, and he warned his confreres that, 'there is no need of making up to Cashmere, blowing trumpets of reform, and brandy and water civilisation.'[82]

Still the rulers of British India found it necessary to salve their consciences by constantly offering the Maharaja good advice. Henry Lawrence exhorted him to rule justly, respect vested interests and property rights, pay his servants regularly and treat subordinate chiefs and tribes with restraint.[83] As indicated by Steinbach, it had long been customary for peasants to surrender a high proportion of their grain crop to the government and then be forced to buy most of it back at artificially inflated prices. Henry Lawrence wrote to Currie, 'I shall endeavour to induce the Maharajah either to make cash assessments, or to fix a rate at which his portion of the crops is to be returned to the Ryot.'[84] But Gulab Singh rarely kept his frequently made promises of reform and thus greatly exasperated his British sponsors. Some four months after he had informed the Secret Committee as to Gulab Singh's good intentions, Hardinge wrote in disillusionment: 'the character of Golab Sing[h] will hardly be found to be such as to justify the high favour shown to him by the British Government.'[85]

The Governor General took as sympathetic a view of the Maharaja as he could, and he quoted Lieutenant R.G. Taylor, who had been stationed in Kashmir, to the effect that Gulab Singh's acts, 'have been characterized generally by kindness and consideration for the cultivators of the soil, and that in no instance have his demands upon them exceeded those of his predecessors.' On the other hand he agreed

to emphasize to the Maharaja that continued misconduct by the ruler of a princely state always resulted in British intervention and that,

> ...If the aversion of the people to a Prince's rule should by his injustice become so universal as to cause the people to seek his downfall, the British Government are bound by no obligations to force the people to submit to a ruler who has deprived himself of their allegence (sic) by his misconduct.

Hardinge approved of Henry Lawrence's recommendation that a resident not be assigned to Kashmir on the assumption that officers permanently resident in native courts tended to develop prejudices either for or against the authorities, but that rather, every year or two, the resident in Lahore with an assistant might visit the vale and remain there for a few months during the hot weather.[86]

When the Sikh insurrection broke out in 1848, Gulab Singh was accused of having consorted with the enemy on the basis of some ambiguous letters found in the possession of two of the insurgents. But the charges were never pursued. The Maharaja had, however, to be reminded of his military obligations and Dalhousie wrote to London:

> ...You will observe that I have considered it necessary to address Golab Sing in strong language of advice and warning, intimating plainly to him what part the British Government expect him to adopt in the present state of affairs, conformable with the obligation imposed on him by Treaty and pointing out to him the consequences of even a lukewarm conduct at a time like the present, when the British Government look for and have a right to demand his cordial and strenuous cooperation.[87]

Gulab Singh protested,[88] and was indeed much too shrewd to give the British any real cause for complaint. He supplied troops to his British overlords, and in November 1850, Dalhousie reported to the Secret Committee that he had invited the Maharaja to meet him,

> when I shall receive him with all possible distinction and endeavour to impress His Highness with a full conviction of our friendly feelings towards him, and to persuade him that we are alike free from all designs against his power, and from all suspicions that he on his part entertains designs against us.[89]

Hobhouse minuted his strong approval. The president of the Punjab Board of Administration, the agency responsible for Kashmir affairs, submitted that Gulab Singh may have vacillated more than should

have been expected of a stout ally, but such allies were rare and, 'perhaps could not be met with among aliens in race and faith; or if they could, Golab Singh has not the constitutional intrepidity to be one.'[90]

As the Governor General analysed the situation, Gulab Singh had played:

> ...the part which was natural to a Native Prince in his perplexed position placed between a power in whose might and whose good will he reposed full trust, and an army which his natural sympathies would have led him to support, and whose vengeance he had reason to dread, if he unsuccessfully joined in opposing them.
>
> ...I believe that thus placed, the Maharajah temporized: that he spoke both parties fair and that he sought to steer his course...so that he could join the winner...It would have been vain perhaps to expect more than this from a Native Prince—especially when that Prince was Gholab Singh of Jammoo.[91]

Despite the increasing frequency of British criticism, Gulab Singh did not feel constrained to greatly change his ways. He remained a continuing source of embarrassment to a British Indian government wedded to the principles of mid-nineteenth century liberalism and humanitarianism. In March 1847, Henry Lawrence wrote to H.M. Elliott, the Governor General's secretary:

> ... I regret to say that my private information from Cashmere is on the whole less favourable than I could wish to the good feeling of the Maharajah towards his subjects—He seems to be thinking of little else than increasing his revenues...The administration of justice is little attended to, indeed is treated as it ever has been in the Punjab as a secondary affair or rather as something in which the authorities have no interest.[92]

A few months later, Cunningham reported that the Maharaja maintained a monopoly over most of the products of Kashmir—saffron, wheat, shawl wool, iron manufactures—that he acted to the detriment of trade:

> ...In my opinion, a profitable trade is feasible from the Trans Sutlej Sikh States...[via Ladakh] to Yarkund. But at present [due to] Gulab Singh's heavy duties and [the] compulsory sale of his own goods to the merchants this traffic may be considered closed.

Cunningham contended that Gulab Singh's exactions, the poor administration of justice and the corrupt system of land tenure had driven two-thirds of the 18,000 weavers,[93] who had plied their trade in Kashmir into the Punjab. Strachey in Ladakh was so critical of the Dogra rule that he interfered in local affairs and had to be chided by his superiors.[94]

The British did their best to turn a blind eye towards Gulab Singh's wanton and unprincipled domestic conduct and to this effect British officers spending the summer in Kashmir were constantly urged to mind their own business, to remember that they were travelling in the dominions of an independent sovereign,[95] and an officer on special duty was deputed to Srinagar every summer to keep a watchful eye on them.[96]

Nevertheless, the government of India could not help being frequently reminded of the Maharaja's true character and of the at least intermittent embarrassment of having him as an ally. In August 1853, a Major Marsden on deputation to Kashmir, reported that a woman who had accidentally wounded a cow in the tongue with a sickle, had been sentenced to have her own tongue cut out and to be paraded through the countryside with her face covered with blood.[97] With the matter brought to his attention, the Governor General had no choice but to warn the Maharaja, 'that such outrages upon justice and humanity are regarded by the British government with abhorrence and are calculated to shake the friendship felt for the state and stability of his own kingdom.'[98]

Yet the Maharaja was astute enough never to go too far and whenever he sensed danger, he dispatched an unctious letter to the Governor General, couched in the most florid Persian style. On one such occasion he lugubriously enquired as to Hardinge's health:

> ...The Maharaja likens himself to a tree which flourishes only when watered by the streams of the Governor General's kindness and friendship. It is his consciousness of this which bids his tongue so constantly discourse of gratitude to His Lordship; and animates him to every personal exertion by which that gratitude may be proved.
>
> ... Let not the Governor General suppose that this is the fulsome language of flattery and compliment; for it is no exaggeration on the Maharaja's part to declare that if all the rivers of the world ran ink, and all the trees of the universe were pens, and spotless amber was given him instead of paper; or if every hair of his body had a mouth, every mouth a tongue, and every tongue the wish to be grateful, it would still be utterly

impossible for him to express the full measure of the gratitude he feels. Indeed it is foolish to desire it – as great madness as to think of spanning the wind of Heaven with the hand; confining the ocean in a goblet, or counting one by one the sands of the desert. The Maharaja therefore reins in the steed of gratitude and refrains from plunging into a forest of praise; but he prays God that so long as the Sun and Moon continue to shine, and the heavens and Earth remain firm, so long may the prosperity and happiness of the Governor General continue to increase...[99]

Above all, Gulab Singh was cognizant of his value to the East India Company and ultimately to the British Crown, and he consequently managed to rule Kashmir essentially according to his own lights, in violation of British standards of good governance, and to the frustration of the East India Company in its attempts to use him and his territories to further their commercial designs on Tibet and Central Asia. In 1856, the British ceremonially recognized Gulab Singh's son and heir, Ranbir Singh, and one year later the wily Maharaja, who had seen himself rise from a servant of the Sikhs to the ruler of a vast princely state and the founder of what he hoped would be an enduring dynasty, died at the age of 65.

NOTES

1. W.G. Osborne, *The Court and Camp of Runjeet Sing* (London, 1840), pp. 53–54.
2. India Office Library (IOL), Hobhouse Papers, DCCCXVI, 184, Hobhouse to Bagley, 11 January 1841.
3. A lakh is equal to 100,000. Approximately ten rupees were equivalent to one pound sterling.
4. National Archives of India (NAI), Political Consultations, 14 February 1838, Nos. 57, 58, Wade to MacNaghten, 1 January 1838. It should be noted that for descriptions of most Indian rulers and functionaries, the author has had to depend on British sources. The views reflected consequently tend to be rather monochromatic.
5. Ibid.
6. IOL, Bengal and India Secret Letters, 1846–47, Governor General to Court of Directors, 3 February 1846.
7. Ibid., Governor General to Secret Committee, 19 February 1846. Hardinge wrote of the transaction: 'It was necessary last March to weaken the Sikhs by depriving them of Kashmire. The distance from Kashmire to the Sutlej is 300 miles of very difficult mountainous country, quite impracticable for six months. To keep a British force 300 miles from any possibility of support would have been an undertaking that merited a strait-waistcoat and not a peerage. The arrangement made was the only alternative. The Government took away with one hand and gave with the

other as the exigencies of the case required…' K.M. Panikkar, *The Founding of the Kashmir State* (London, 1930), 106–107.

8. A crore is equivalent to 10,000,000.
9. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, (Calcutta, 1931), Article 1, Treaty of Amritsar, 1, 50–54, XII, 21–22.
10. NAI, Secret Consultations, 26 December 1846, 113–1343, Governor General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846. It was claimed that Gulab Singh had acquired Suchet Singh's treasure at Ferozepure and that he had used it to pay part of the fee. IOL, Secret Letter, 19 April 1846, Enclosure 11.
11. IOL, Secret Letter 7, 4 March 1845, Encl. Treaty of Amritsar.
12. IOL, Secret 55, 21 November 1846, Enclosure 7, H. Lawrence to F. Currie, Article 1, Treaty of Amritsar, Aitchison, op. cit., 21–22.
13. NAI, Secret Consultations, Nos. 1331-1343, Governor General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846.
14. IOL, Secret Letter 10, 5 April 1846.
15. Ibid., 55, 21 November 1846, Encl. 7, H. Lawrence to F. Currier, Secretary in the Foreign Department, Government of India, 2 November 1846.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 48, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 13, Broome to Hardinge, 23 October 1846.
18. Ibid., Secret 40, 19 September 1846.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid., Secret 42, 4 October 1846, Enclosure 13, H. Lawrence to Currie, 24 September 1846.
24. Ibid., Secret 40, 19 September 1846.
25. Ibid., Enclosure 4, H. Lawrence to Gulab Singh, 12 September 1846.
26. Ibid., H. Lawrence to Gulab Singh, 24 September 1846.
27. Ibid., Secret 42, 4 October 1846, Enclosure 9, demi-official Broome to H. Lawrence, 13 September 1846.
28. Ibid., Secret 47, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 8, Memo by Governor General, 6 October 1846.
29. Ibid., Enclosure 13, H. Lawrence to Gulab Singh, 5 October 1846.
30. Ibid., Secret 42, 4 October 1846, Enclosure 11, demi-official, J. Lawrence to H. Lawrence, 21 September 1846.
31. Ibid., Secret 47, 23 October 1846.
32. Ibid., Secret 49, 3 November 1846.
33. Ibid., Secret 42, 4 October 1846.
34. Ibid., Secret 47, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 4, J. Lawrence to Sheikh, 1 October 1846.
35. Ibid., 48, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 13, Edwardes to H. Lawrence, 3 October 1846.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., 49, 3 November 1846, Currie to H. Lawrence, 2 November 1846.
38. Ibid., 57, 4 December 1846, Enclosure 7, Governor General to Currie, 23 November 1846.
39. Ibid., IOL, Board's Drafts of Secret Letters to India, 2 December 1846.

40. IOL, Secret 57, 4 December 1846.
41. Ibid., 62, 22 December 1846, Enclosure 3, H. Lawrence to Currie, 17 December 1846.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid., 59, 21 December 1846, Enclosure 5, Currie to Dalip Singh, 9 December 1846.
44. NAI, Sec. Cons., 26 December 1846, 1331–1343, Lawrence to Cunningham, off. Secretary to the Governor General's agent in the Punjab, no date. Secret 12, 5 May 1846, Enclosure, Lawrence to Captain J. Abbott, 16 March 1846.
45. The shawl wool, or pashm in its unrefined state, was brought to Ladakh on the backs of very large sheep. In Leh, Kashmiri merchants bought it at the cost of one small rupee for 80 puls (small handfuls). The pashm was then cleaned on the spot—about one part in four being fit for the weaver. From Leh the cleaned pashm was carried on the backs of coolies to Kashmir—a journey that took eighteen days. Once in the vale, the governor assumed jurisdiction. He sold the white pashm at a profit of about 20 per cent and the clean or white pashm could then be bought in Srinagar for approximately four small rupees a seer (2.2 lb.). Once the pashm was reduced to thread, about 15 to 20 pounds, at a cost of 120–150 small rupees, were needed to make a large pair of Kashmir shawls. Undyed shawl stuff (ubra) sold for Rs.5 a yard.

    Shawls could not be taken from the loom without the presence of an inspector. They were then taken to the customs house where they were stamped and a price placed on them. The purchaser was liable to several duties on the way from Srinagar to the plains below. It cost Rs.4 just for a permit to leave the valley with a shawl. G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo, the Countries Adjoining the Mountain-course of the Indus, and the Himalayas, North of the Panjab* (London, 1842), II, 126–133.

    Moorcroft and Trebeck stated that the wool used in the manufacture of shawl was of two kinds—the fleece of the domestic goat called pashm shal (or shawl wool) and that of the wild goat, wild sheep, and other animals, called *Hsali Tus*. They claimed that the finished shawls were sent to the collector of stamp revenues who levied a 26 per cent *ad valorum* stamp duty. Normally the annual income to the governors of Kashmir from the shawl wool trade amounted to L.300,000. W. Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, Ladakh, and Kashmir in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara* (London, 1841), II, 164–179.

    F. Younghusband in his *Kashmir* (London, 1911), 212, estimated that the exports of shawls between 1862 and 1870 averaged 25 to 28 lakhs of rupees in value each year (or more than a quarter of a million sterling), and that 25,000 to 28,000 persons were engaged in their manufacture.
46. Translation of the Persian source quoted in A.N. Sapru, *The Building of the Jammu and Kashmir State—Being the Achievement of Maharaja Gulab Singh*, (Lahore, 1931). It should be noted that the treaty provided for the continuation of the *Lop-Chak* caravan which every three years, in accordance with the ancient treaty of Tin Mogang between the Tibeto-Mongols and the King of Ladakh (1647), made its way from Leh over the watershed of the Indus-Tsangpo with goods and gifts for the clergy of Ladakh. This caravan, consisting of hundreds of mules, took over

two months to complete its journey to Lhasa and was the source of considerable commercial profit to its sponsors.

47. IOL, Secret 12, 5 May 1846, Enclosure, H. Lawrence to Captain J. Abbott, 16 March 1846.
48. IOL, Secret 33, 14 August 1846.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid., Enclosure 28, H. Lawrence to Cunningham, 23 July 1846.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid., H. Lawrence to P.A. Vans Agnew, 23 July 1846.
53. Ibid., Enclosure 33, Governor General to the Vizier of Lhasa, 14 August 1846.
54. Ibid., No. 33, 14 August 1846, Enclosure 30, H. Lawrence to Currie, 31 July 1846.
55. IOL, Secret 36, 3 September 1846, Hardinge to J.F. Davis, Hong Kong, 29 August 1846.
56. IOL, Davis to Hardinge, 18 November 1846.
57. Ibid., Enclosure, Davis to K'e-Ying, 18 December 1846.
58. IOL, Secret 35, 25 May 1847, Enclosure 3, K'e-Ying to Davis, 13 January 1847.
59. Ibid., Davis to K'e-Ying, 21 January 1847.
60. IOL, Secret 48, 28 July 1847.
61. Ibid., 35, 25 May 1847, Enclosure 3, Davis to Hardinge, 28 January 1847.
62. IOL, Secret 35, Davis to K'e-Ying, 21 January 1847.
63. IOL, Secret 35, 25 May 1847, Enclosure 4, K'e-Ying to Davis, enclosed in Davis to Hardinge, 30 January 1847.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid., 36, 2 May 1848, Enclosure 6, Davis to Hardinge, 12 August 1847.
66. Ibid., Enclosure 11, K'e-Ying to Davis, 3 January 1848.
67. Ibid., Enclosure 3, H. Lawrence to Cunningham, 16 July 1847.
68. Ibid., 36, 2 May 1848, Enclosure 15, J. Lawrence to Elliot, 23 November 1847.
69. Ibid., Enclosure 24, Currie to Elliot, 23 March 1848.
70. Ibid.
71. IOL, Secret 73, 21 October 1847, Enclosure 7, Agnew's Diary, 22–28 August 1847.
72. Ibid., 75, 6 November 1847, Enclosure 4, Agnew's Diary, 2 September 1847.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid., Enclosure 6, Agnew's Diary, 10 September 1847.
75. Ibid., Enclosure 6, Agnew's Diary, 12 September 1847.
76. The acceptance of a suzerain was not distasteful to the hill people. For small amounts of tribute, they usually received valuable presents and sometimes a subsidy in return. From time to time, when it was expedient, the hill chiefs reaffirmed their allegiance to Kashmir. Two examples (from Hunza and Nagar) are contained in the India Office Library, Home Correspondence, Secret and Political, enclosures from Colonel Prideaux to the Government of India, February 27, 1892. They bear no date, but were no doubt concluded at one of the times when the Dogras had reasserted their domination of Gilgit. Jafar Khan of Nagar undertook to 'send every year my Mutabirs (trusted men) to the Sirkar for the purpose of paying respects with the same annual tribute as I now pay, and if any one will ever attack Gilgit I will assist the Hakim of Gilgit.' Ghazanfur Khan of Hunza promised to protect traders passing through his territory.

'...I have accepted the rule of the Sirkar, and have become one of the well-wishers of the Maharajah Gulab Singh; and I hereby promise that I will never raise any objection to serve and carry out the orders of the Sirkar in any respect...and in return for my services...whatever the Sirkar may kindly grant me, I will accept. The friend of the Sirkar will be treated as my friend, and his enemy will be my enemy...'

This is not to say that the British did not manifest a good deal of ambivalence on the matter. They were not always too sure that the extension of Kashmir control northwards was the best means of ensuring stability, and the Government of the Punjab frequently reminded the Maharaja that articles four and five of the Treaty of Amritsar bound him to gain the consent of the British authorities before engaging in any adventures on the frontier. (IOL, Pol 77, enclosures)

77. In return, the British would reduce his annual tribute from Rs.15,000 to Rs.9,200—the remission being equal to the average of his annual customs income. IOL, Secret 48, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 17, H. Lawrence to Currie, 24 September 1846.
78. Ibid., 17, 20 February 1847, Enclosure 8, H. Lawrence to Currie, 31 December 1846.
79. Ibid., 30, 8 June 1847, Enclosure 8, H. Lawrence to Elliot, 28 May 1847.
80. Ibid., 57, 4 December 1846.
81. Ibid., 47, 23 October 1846, Enclosure 7, Broome to H. Lawrence, 15 September 1846.
82. British Museum, Hobhouse Papers, BM 36477, Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 4 August 1851.
83. Ibid., pvt. Henry Steinbach to Dalhousie, 4 August 1851.
84. IOL, Secret 50, 3 November 1846, Enclosure 4, H. Lawrence to Currie, 26 October 1846.
85. IOL, Demo-official, Correspondence, UI, extract of letter, Clerk to Lord Ripon, 2 March 1849.
86. Secret 55, 21 November 1846, Enclosure 18, H. Lawrence to Gulab Singh, 6 November 1846.
87. Ibid., 57, 4 December 1846, Enclosure 6, H. Lawrence to Currie, 15 November 1846.
88. Ibid., 3, 24 April 1847.
89. Ibid., 10, 22 January 1848, minute by the Governor General, 1 January 1848, H. Lawrence's recommendation.
90. Ibid., 9, 7 February 1849.
91. Ibid., 13, 21 February 1849.
92. Ibid., 37, 22 November 1850.
93. Ibid., Enclosure 2, minute by the President of the Punjab Board of Administration, 3 August 1850.
94. Ibid., minute by the Governor General, 9 November 1850.
95. IOL, Secret 27, 20 April 1847, Enclosure 5, H. Lawrence to Elliot, 26 March 1847.
96. Ibid., Enclosure, J. Lawrence to Elliot, 28 February 1848.
97. IOL, Secret Letter No. 67, October 4, 1853, Enclosure 4, minute by the Governor General, 10 September 1853.

98. Ibid., No. 6, 15 May 1850, Enclosure 26, Rules for Officers and others travelling in Gulab Singh's dominions, 12 April 1850.
99. Ibid., No. 67, 4 October 1853, Enclosure 4, minute by the Governor General, 10 September 1853.
100. Ibid., Enclosure 3, P. Melville, Sec. to the Chief Comm., Punjab to J.P. Grant, Off. Sec. to the Govt. of India, for Dept., 30 August 1853, enclosing Marsden to Melville, 13 August 1853.
101. IOL, Secret Letter No. 67, 4 October 1853, Enclosure 4, minute by the Governor General, 10 September 1853.
102. Ibid., No. 36, 2 September 1846, Enclosure 10, Gulab Singh to Hardinge (translation by H.B. Edwards), 26 July 1846

2

KASHMIR AND THE 'GREAT GAME' IN THE PAMIRS (1860–1880)

Gulab Singh, who had been placed on the throne of the newly created state of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh by the British at the close of the Anglo-Sikh Wars in 1846, might not have been imperial Britain's most savoury ally, but he was dependable in the large sense because his sound judgement had convinced him that loyalty to the British cause was the one key to the maintenance of power. Whether his successor, Ranbir Singh, would follow in his father's footsteps was a matter for conjecture. And it was an issue of some urgency, for the recrudescence of a familiar disease—Russophobia—was to place a greater importance on Kashmir in many official minds than had heretofore been the case.

Fear of a Russian invasion of India was a persistent virus. It tended to come to life at least once in each generation of British governors on the subcontinent, only to become dormant on the frequent realization that the Russians had no serious intention of crossing the passes into India, nor the technology or military capacity to do so. Unfortunately, the lesson had to be relearned by each new wave of aggressive young men as they assumed the reins of authority.

The First Afghan War of 1839–42 had presaged a period of calm during which Calcutta's fear of the Russians was assuaged and, as a consequence, the northern frontier regions were largely ignored. By the mid-1850s, however, there had been a considerable changing of the guard in India and with it the spectre of the Russian hordes pouring through the defiles of the great northern mountain barrier into the sunny plains below. Sir Henry Rawlinson, although essentially an insignificant figure, was nonetheless, in the 1860s and 1870s, an important voice on the Council of India in London. And the chief new prophet of the old religion.[1] He felt the Russians had to be stopped

much before they reached the Hindu Kush. Three years after the conclusion of the Crimean War, he went so far as to advocate a British invasion of Georgia.

> …A campaign in Georgia, will strike Russia in her most vulnerable quarter. It will lead to results of permanent benefit to us, in arresting her further encroachment to the East, and it will assert for us that "prestige" which is essential to the preservation of our Indian Empire….[2]

Sir Henry Green, the political superintendent on the Sindh frontier, and General John Jacob (in whose honour the city of Jacobabad was named) favoured the immediate acquisition of Quetta to guard against a possible Russian advance through Afghanistan, and Henry Green also envisaged a possible future British fortress at Herat.[3] The Punjab government, early in 1866, sent a certain Pandit Munphool, on semi-official instructions from the Governor General, to investigate Russian designs on Kokand and Chinese Turkestan.[4] Munphool's mission was no doubt prompted, at least in part, by a report filed by some merchants in early 1865 that a treaty had been concluded between the czar and the khan of Bokhara providing for Russian cantonments in various places throughout the state on the easiest route for armies on the march for Persia, Herat and Balkh, etc.[5]

Nevertheless, the Governor General (since 1858 a Viceroy) Lord John Lawrence, and his council, were unanimously in opposition to Henry Green and John Jacob's policy.[6] Nine months later, Lawrence forcefully restated his position. 'You will observe,' he wrote Sir Stafford Northcote at the India Office, 'that we are unanimously and strongly of the opinion that the prosperity of the country would be placed in jeopardy by *any advance beyond our present border*'.[7]

Sir Peter Lumsden, one of the members of the council, expressed the opinion that Russia, like Britain, was really only interested in the extension of commerce (which in regard to Central Asia, he felt, was no more than a futile venture). Lumsden thought orders had probably emanated from St. Petersburg just as they had from Whitehall, forbidding further advances. 'Towards Russia', he contended,

> we have but to pursue a dignified path becoming a civilised nation, and not allow imaginary prospects or panics to carry us into undertakings proved to be diametrically opposed to our interests, and only justified by the dog-in-the-manger policy of rushing at them, because Russia may avail herself

of them. It has already been shown that if Russia has advanced, so have we. No Russian army ever appeared on the banks of the Oxus until we had occupied Afghanistan and thrust our Agents into Herat, Oorgunj and Bokhara, when self-preservation required of her a counter movement towards Khiva, which resulted in disaster equal to our own. Russia like India requires peace and development, and to secure from her a compact, guaranteeing the independence of Afghanistan and Herat, should be an initiatory measure to further combination for the development of communications and a general understanding on an Asiatic policy, which may be mutually advantageous.[8]

Lumsden concluded by contending that the Russian threat to India was at best remote and that the British should certainly not advance to meet a non-existent danger. For that matter, he was not

> at all certain that Russia might not prove a safer ally—a better neighbour than the Mahomedan races of Central Asia and Cabul. She will introduce civilisation; she would abate the fanataticism and ferocity of Mahomedanism, which still exercises so powerful an influence on India.[9]

When the khan of Bokhara petitioned the queen and the Viceroy for help against the Russians, the latter reported to London: '...we have plainly but courteously refused to have anything to do with the alleged grievances of Bokhara against that power [Russia].'[10] Indeed, British and Russian imperial policy seemed very similar.

In a dispatch addressed to his minister in Vienna, the Russian minister for foreign affairs, Prince Gorchakov, had stated that a country with uncivilized nations or tribes on its borders had inevitably, step-by-step, to subjugate them. He claimed that Russia had been forced to follow such a course in Central Asia. It had been the Russian determination to occupy lands inhabited by wandering tribes with whom it had proved impossible to enter into any permanent friendly understanding, but to halt when friendly tribes, given to agricultural pursuits and with whom peaceable relations could more easily be maintained, were encountered.[11]

Prince Gorchakov abjured all desire for conquest. 'His object is the progress of civilisation,' read the paraphrasing of the minister's words sent to the foreign office by the British ambassador in Paris, 'in which he ought he thinks to meet with the hearty concurrence of all European Powers. Civilisation,' he says,

> is best fostered by the extension of commerce, but commerce can only flourish in places where violence and rapine are banished. Force is necessary to extirpate the latter and must be applied before the benefits which are the concomitants of Commerce, can be appreciated...[12]

Russian archives reveal that Ranbir Singh sent a mission to Tashkent in November 1865, shortly after the city's conquest. The Governor General of Russian Turkestan, N.A. Kryzhanovsky, advised Gorchakov that the existing relationship with Great Britain was too important to be jeopardized and that the envoys from Kashmir, and others like them who might from time to time appear, should be informed in writing that the emperor of all the Russians was on terms of cordial friendship with the queen of England. The suggested policy was apparently adopted and the Kashmir delegation of 1865–66 and another sent in 1869 were sent home empty-handed.[13] What the records in Russia did not reveal and later generations of British statesmen failed to remember, was that at least one of these missions was sent at the request of the foreign department of the government of India to sound out Russian intentions.[14]

Despite the unsympathetic attitude of the Viceroy and his council, Henry Rawlinson persisted in attempting to open his countrymen's eyes to the Russian threat. He pointed to danger in Persia, Afghanistan, and Kashmir,[15] but Lawrence was determined not to extend India's frontiers to meet what he felt to be an exaggerated concern:

> ...We think that endeavours might be made to come to some clear understanding with the Court of St. Petersburg as to its projects and designs in Central Asia, and that it might be given to understand, in firm but courteous language, that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan or in those of any State which lies contiguous to its frontier...The truth appears to us to be that the advances of Russia, coupled with the constant allusions made in the newspapers to her progress as compared with what is called, the inaction of the British Government, have produced, in the minds of Europeans and Natives, what we believe to be an exaggerated opinion of her resources and power. A good mutual understanding between the two Powers, though difficult of attainment, would enable us to take means to counteract unfounded rumours and to prevent unnecessary alarms...[16]
>
> ...I frankly confess that I cannot...bring myself to see the formidable character of the danger with which we are said to be threatened by the presence of the Russians in Central Asia, whilst, on the other hand, I can

> perceive much real danger to which we are exposed from various circumstances within our own borders in India...[17]

The Earl of Mayo, when he replaced Lawrence as Viceroy, was less confident of Russian intentions. In contrast to the India Office, which had come to suspect the idea,[18] he favoured Henry Rawlinson's concept[19] of a neutral zone between Russian and British possessions.[20] But he agreed with London on the desirability of a 'frank and clear understanding' with Russia. Frontier states were to be informed that imperial Britain had no wish to annex them, but limited military operations might from time-to-time be necessary in border areas, and a treaty of neutrality with local rulers in this area would merely serve to paralyse British power and quite possibly mislead the Russians. The British had no intention of extending their territories northwards, Mayo asserted, but they should make no solemn commitment to this effect as temporary occupation of certain lands might from time-to-time be essential.

Although he declared that Russia and Britain had a common mission in Asia, 'namely the establishment of good government and the Civilisation of Mighty Nations entrusted to their care',[21] Mayo was influenced by the school of thought represented by Henry Rawlinson and R.B. Shaw, who was to be of considerable service to the Indian government in the future. Shaw had remarked in a pamphlet entitled, 'Russian Advances in Asia':

> ...It is...not impossible for Russia, if ready to make sufficient sacrifices of men and money, to place a small army with artillery in Cashmere at a time of year when the British troops in India could have no means to oppose it, and during the season when no Englishman is allowed to remain in the territories of the Maharaja, who might get news of the movement in time. Cashmere is also well adapted for defence against attacks from India. I have been reviewing the *physical* possibilities deduced from a personal inspection of the route, not the political possibilities...The Chitral Valley is the only one which comes down the backbone of the watershed between India and Toorkistan, and conducts, it may be said, right down to the plains. Here, by crossing only *one* pass, and that a most easy one, the head waters of the Oxus are reached...[22]

Slowly Mayo began to place greater credence in tales of Russian machinations aimed at the eventual destruction of the British raj. In December 1869, he wrote to Argyll at the India Office:

> ...We continue to receive, both from official and non-official sources, reports of the existence of a policy in Central Asia on the part of Russia, not only tending to incite conflict amongst the States bordering on her dominions, but opposed to the interests of the British Government in those regions and at variance with her studied declarations of peace and non-intervention...The feeling is common throughout all the territories lying between India and the Russian Frontier that the interests of England and Russia in Central Asia are antagonistic, and it is to Russia that all those naturally look for support who are inimical to Her Majesty's Government...[23]

And indeed, the course of Russian progress was enough to alarm those less sure of the czar's intentions than Lawrence had been. During the later 1840s, the Russians had constructed a series of small forts in the steppe south of Orenburg. By 1864, the whole Kazakh Steppe was encircled by a line of Russian stations, and in 1865 the city of Tashkent was captured. The following year, Khudoiar Khan of Kokand, finding further resistance impossible, came to terms with the Russians, and 1868 saw General von Kaufman taking Samarkand in the emirate of Bokhara. By a treaty of June of that year, Bokhara ceded Samarkand, Katta-Kurgan, and adjacent territory to Russia and agreed to pay an indemnity. The amir was maintained in power but came completely under Russian control. Russian traders were allowed free access to the markets of Kokand and Bokhara with only a small, insignificant tax being levied on imported Russian goods. In 1873, Khiva, the last of the Central Asian Khanates, was brought to heel, and in 1876 the troublesome client state of Kokand was annexed.

But Mayo, although more suspicious of Russian intentions than his predecessor, was nonetheless a moderate and not a Russophobe. He was forced to reconcile to the alarmist views of British officers, who saw the Russian armies rapidly advancing through Central Asia towards India, with a weakening conviction, very similar to Lawrence's, that Russia had no designs on India. However, Mayo could not help being ambivalent, and mounting uncertainty as to Russian intentions motivated an increasing interest in the rugged and uncharted lands adjacent to the mountains of the northern barrier. The government of India, however, had no wish to become directly involved. When in 1866 and 1870, Aman-ul-Mulk, the ruler of Chitral, applied to the Viceroy for aid in gaining Gilgit, Punyal, and Yasin from the Maharaja of Kashmir, his request was politely refused,[24] while Ranbir Singh was

urged not to give the northern chiefs cause for complaint and to refer to the lieutenant-governor of the Punjab for advice.

The Viceroy wrote:

> ...In view of the rapid march of political events in the countries beyond the Northern and Western frontier of Cashmere, there is a strong necessity for constant watchfulness over all the diplomatic proceedings in which British interests are directly or indirectly involved. His Excellency in Council entertains no doubt that the Maharaja will see that his safety mainly depends on keeping the Lieutenant-Governor informed of his dealings with other powers, and His Excellency in Council hopes that he will readily seek his counsel and act on his advice.[25]

The government of India's reluctance to become embroiled with the unruly northern frontier states was again manifested in the case of Captain G.W. Hayward, formerly of the 79th Highlanders, who was planning to travel to Yasin under the auspices of the Royal Geographic Society. Hayward had made some uncomplimentary remarks about Ranbir Singh in the *Englishman* and the *Pioneer*, two Anglo-Indian newspapers, and the Governor General feared that should Hayward fall afoul of the hill tribes, any harm that came to him would be blamed on the Maharaja of Kashmir.

On 10 June 1870, Aitchison, in the foreign department, informed Hayward that if he persisted on undertaking the journey to Yasin, 'it must be clearly understood that you do so on your own responsibility'.[26] Hayward was determined to ignore the government of India's advice. On 9 September, Mayo informed Argyll that Hayward had been murdered by Mir Wali, the ruler of Yasin, while on the way from Kashmir to Yarkand.[27] T.H. Thornton, the secretary to the Punjab government, conjectured the reasons for the assassination. Mir Wali might have killed Hayward for plunder, or:

> It is equally probable from the amicable relations which appear to exist now, as they did formerly, between Chitral and Yassin, that a fanatical suspicion and dread of an English observer who entered the country after a protracted stay at Srinaggur and was an object of especial care on the part of the Maharaja up to his own border, may have led to a mistaken apprehension of Mr. Hayward's views and purposes and to the conclusion that, while his destruction would remove a spy, it might also seriously commit the Maharaja, their enemy, with the British Government.[28]

The government of India at this juncture limited itself to offering rewards for the apprehension of Hayward's murderers and to announcing that it would make Aman-ul-Mulk, Mir Wali's father-in-law, who was in some degree considered responsible, feel its displeasure when the opportunity arose.[29]

When Douglas Forsyth, the peripatetic British diplomat, returned from a mission to St. Petersburg in 1870, the Viceroy was relieved to hear that in an interview with Forsyth at Baden, Prince Gorchakov,

> dilated with pleasure on the happy relations existing between Her Majesty's present Government and that of Russia, and expressed great satisfaction on hearing that the non-aggressive policy which had marked Sir John Lawrence's viceroyalty was not likely to be departed from by Lord Mayo.[30]

Gorchakov had remarked that Russia had no designs on Afghanistan and that 'it was the determination of the Russian government that there should be no quarrel between the two countries regarding Asiatic boundaries'.[31] In a later conversation at Heidelberg, the prince had assured Lord Clarendon, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, that both he and the emperor considered that 'the extension of territory was extension of weakness'.[32] To the British ambassador, he averred,

> that as both Governments are free from all arrière-pensées, ambitious views or unfriendly views towards each other, the more fully and frankly all questions connected with Central Asia are discussed between them, the more effectually will the mists be blown away, which through misrepresentations of over-zealous subordinate agents, may at any time hang over them.[33]

Throughout his stewardship of the government of India, Lord Mayo remained remarkably consistent in his view of what British policy should be in that undefined region where the Russian and British empires were likely to meet. In May 1871, he wrote to Argyll:

> ...We entertain as firmly as ever the conviction that the peace and prosperity of Central Asia depend on the acceptance and observance both by Russia and ourselves of the policy described in our Despatch of 7th December 1869, viz.: that England and Russia should abstain from all aggressive designs in those regions, that we should endeavour to create on our respective Frontiers a series of strong, independent and neutral States, and so gradually to provide for the termination of that state of conflict and chronic disturbance which has, for many ages, prevailed in Central Asia.[34]

Some months later, shortly before his assassination, the Viceroy repeated his message. The Indian government had to maintain cordial relations with the states on its frontier. 'We should make them feel', he wrote Argyll,

> that, though we are all-powerful, we have no wish to encroach on their authority, but, on the contrary, that our earnest desire is to support their power and to maintain their nationality; and that if severe necessity arise, we might assist them with money, arms and even perhaps in certain eventualities with men. We could thus create in these States outworks of our Empire, and assuring them that the days of annexation are passed, make them practically feel that they have everything to gain and nothing to lose by endeavouring to deserve our favour and support.
>
> 3. Further we think that any attempt to neutralise those territories to the European sense or to sanction or invite the interference of any European Power in their affairs, should be strenuously opposed.
>
> 4. It may take years to develop this policy. It is contrary to what has been hitherto our course in India; but if it is once established, recognised, and appreciated, our Empire would be comparatively secure.[35]

In his last days in office, Mayo erased all doubt that he was an opponent of the forward policy. He wrote,

> ...Our difficulties with Russia are greater than with Turkey and Persia, but if a firm, decided, and conciliatory tone be adopted with all these Powers; if we could assure them that we have no ulterior design of our own to serve; that our only object is the maintenance of peace and the spread of civilisation over the wide territories which they govern, the moral influence that we could exercise in this direction would be so powerful as to render it extremely difficult for any of them, wilfully or deliberately, to break the peace...[36]

Yet, honeyed words by the czar and his ministers or their British counterparts could not hide the persistence of a good deal of mutual antipathy.[37] One of the chief causes of this condition was the Russo-Afghan frontier. M. de Stremoukov, the director of the asiatic department of the Russian foreign office, felt that all territory currently held by Sher Ali should be considered part of Afghanistan but, 'that beyond this limit he should not use nor exercise any influence or interference.' The British should, through their good offices, restrain the Afghans, and the Russians should act similarly in Bokhara. Stremoukov suggested that the British and Russians should jointly

determine the Afghan boundaries.[38] Mayo, for his part, thought the river Oxus should be Afghanistan's northern border and that Afghanistan should hold Badakshan but not Balkh.[39]

Russo-British conversations on the northern border of Afghanistan were conducted between 1869 and 1873. The Afghans were not involved, and what emerged was a highly unsatisfactory and general understanding, concluded with little reference to geographic or ethnic considerations, governed more by convenience than by any other single factor and resulting in no formal protocol.[40] The so-called agreement of 1873 had nothing to say about the eastern Pamirs, but the possession of this region was not yet an issue, and it did assuage mutual fears in the one sector where the Russian and British spheres of influence were already in intimate contact.

As far as Kashmir was concerned, Russo-British amity was the single best guarantee of its independence. Stability tended to allay suspicion, but any disturbance of the *status quo* was cause for alarm. While the British and Russians were groping towards some sort of understanding along the Oxus, to the north-east of Kashmir, the established order was collapsing in Chinese Turkestan, to the north-west. The Ch'ing dynasty, torn asunder for fifteen years by the T'aiping rebellion, was just about to surmount this catastrophe when new insurrections among the Muslim tribesmen in the western frontier areas undermined Chinese authority on these outer limits of the empire. In 1862, a rebellion broke out in Dsungaria and spread to the Ili Valley. Here in 1864 the Dungans and Taranchi united to throw off Chinese rule, but soon the two victors quarrelled among themselves, and in the ensuing hostilities the Taranchi prevailed.[41] In conjunction with these rebellions, Yakub Beg, a Kokandi general who had been prominent in the defence of Ak-Mechet in the lower Syr-Daria against the Russians, led a revolt against the Chinese in Kashgar, and by 1867 had created an independent state for himself that was to include virtually all of what had been Chinese Turkestan.

Yakub Beg was a man of considerable intelligence. He soon realized that the surest way to secure his new state against Chinese reconquest was to come to an understanding with both Britain and Russia, under the terms of which they would find preservation of an independent Eastern Turkestan preferable to the re-establishment of Chinese control. From the first, Yakub Beg proclaimed the reversal of restrictive policies of the Chinese. He encouraged merchants from all neighbouring states to trade with Eastern Turkestan. In 1866, even before he had

consolidated his position, Yakub Beg had written to the Maharaja of Kashmir proposing the establishment of friendly relations.[42]

It so happened that while a Russian contingent was crossing Yakub Beg's frontier in the north, two Englishmen, R.B. Shaw, the enterprising tea planter from Kangara, and Captain G.W. Hayward, were entering the country from the south. They were kept virtual prisoners for some months to allow the departure of the official Russian mission before the unofficial British delegation was received. In due course, however, Shaw was welcomed by Yakub Beg, who treated him with courtesy and asked Shaw's advice on the appropriateness of sending an envoy to India. Yakub Beg was all flattery. 'The Queen of England is like the Sun,' he said,

> which warms everything it shines upon. I am in the cold, and desire that some of the rays should fall upon me. I am very small—I am a man of yesterday. It is a great honour for me that you have come. I count upon you to help me in your country ... You must keep on sending ... merchandise to Toorkistan. Whether the Malika [Queen Victoria] sends me an envoy or not, she must decide, but your own special agent must come and go.[43]

R.B. Shaw was sufficiently impressed by what he saw of Yakub Beg's government. He praised the educational and judicial systems and reported that,

> the treatment of the people is not tyrannical. There is no forced labour in this country, no 'corvees' such as disgrace Cashmeer, and even our own hill-districts of the Punjab ... If extra labour is required, men are hired without compulsion, and receive regular payment ... The labourers, too, give a good day's work for a good day's wages.[44]

Food was cheap, taxes fairly levied, and internal trade quite free. As for the major cities, Shaw estimated that Yarkand contained about 80,000 inhabitants and that Kashgar, which he did not actually visit, was even larger. Some Russian cloth was in the bazaars of Yarkand but none of British manufacture—a situation that could be remedied with a view to starting a profitable trade with Eastern Turkestan—rich in mineral resources and jade, copper, iron, lead, and gold, which was mined in Khotan.

It did not take long for Lord Mayo to react to the new circumstances.[46] He urged the establishment of increased commercial

intercourse between India and Eastern Turkestan and foresaw 'no serious political obstacle to the development of a valuable trade'.[47] He thought British firearms, cutlery, tea, spices, piece-goods, cheap types of broadcloth, and skins would gladly be exchanged by the inhabitants of Central Asia for gold, raw silk, wool, churrus (opium), felts, carpets, horses and mules, etc.[48]

But before any remunerative commerce could be established, the trade routes had to be determined and it was concluded by the Indian authorities that the most feasible path would run to Leh and then via the Karakoram Pass, or the Chang Chenmo Valley, to Turkestan. Therefore, it was necessary to gain the permission of the Maharaja of Kashmir for the construction of a road through his territories. In late 1869, Captain H. Grey was sent to Kashmir by Lord Mayo to initiate talks with the Maharaja. The negotiations were completed by Forsyth, who on 2 May 1870 signed a treaty on behalf of the British government with Ranbir Singh. The treaty provided for a road survey through Kashmir territory, the appointment of joint-commissioners at Leh (one to represent British India and the other the Kashmir government)[49] to supervise the Eastern Turkestan trade, and the elimination of all transit duties on the new 'free highway' from India to Yakub Beg's territories.[50]

But the establishment of an essentially independent state to the north of Kashmir was to affect more than trade—it awakened dreams of British access to the rumoured wealth of Central Asia. Anglo-Russian rivalry was rekindled over which empire was to establish a preponderant commercial and political influence in the area; as a consequence Kashmir's independence further eroded.

In the autumn of 1868, a Russian delegation headed by Captain Reinthal, aide-de-camp to the Governor of Russian Turkestan, visited Yakub Beg, and subsequently, an envoy of Yakub Beg's, Mirza Shadi, travelled to St. Petersburg. But the efforts of Russian merchants were disproportionate and frustrated by the stringent controls implemented by Yakub Beg.

The Maharaja of Kashmir had been most reluctant to sign the new treaty, for under its provisions he not only found his independence jeopardized, but he also lost the 5 per cent *ad valorem* transit duty that had heretofore been collected. When the first British trade expedition to Turkestan passed through Ladakh, the necessary supplies that were to have been provided by the Kashmir authorities were not on hand, causing a great loss of livestock. Dr H. Cayley, the British joint-

commissioner in Leh, was 'convinced that the plan was intentionally formed of arresting progress of the mission to Yarkand and, still more, of preventing the opening of the Chang Chenmo route'.[51] Thus, inadvently Kashmir had driven yet another nail into the coffin that was its independence from direct British intervention and control.

But the Turkestan adventure was destined to come to nought. Yakub Beg, whose last months were plagued by civil war and increased Chinese pressure, died in September 1877, and a Chinese reconquest of the area rapidly ensued.[52] The Russians were thus forced to disgorge the Ili Valley; although they did not do so until 1883.

The Maharaja of Kashmir, whose independence had been eroded by British intimacy with Yakub Beg, could only breathe a sigh of relief at the demise of the short-lived Atalik Ghazi's state. Never again were the imaginations of Englishmen to be roused as they were in the time of Yakub Beg's reign by the romance of Yarkand and Kashgar. The promises of trade and influence which, if fulfilled, would have adversely affected the independence Kashmir enjoyed, were conclusively proved to be limited by natural and political obstacles, and the attention of merchants and statesmen turned to more profitable ventures.[53]

But if Ranbir Singh could thank providence that the riches of Kashgaria had turned out to be mere dross, he still had reason to regret Britain's imperial excursion into Central Asia. For it sensitized the British to the Russian presence yet again, and the fear of Russian movements along the frontiers of the Indian subcontinent always spelled trouble for Kashmir. Forsyth thought Russian officers might well disobey their emperor.

'...I fear,' he wrote, 'that the desire for personal distinction and aggrandizement is leading Russian officers on to seek conquests without any regard to the justice of their action or the orders of their Emperor'.[54] Forsyth was disturbed by rumours of Russian designs on Badakshan, Khiva and Chitral, and reports of Russian steamers on the Oxus. Russian support for Abdur Rahman against Sher Ali in Afghanistan, he contended, would carry the czar's influence to the banks of the Indus.[55]

The increasing uneasiness towards Russia was constantly fired by articles in the Russian press. *Novre Vremia* urged further annexations in Central Asia,[56] and the small commercial journal *Birja* asserted that, 'a collusion between England and Russia, at the foot of the Himalayas, is evidently approaching'.[57] Rumours of intercourse between Ranbir

Singh and the Russians[58] combined with recollections of the Maharaja's reluctance to cooperate with British efforts to trade with Yarkand via Kashmir, to prompt a desire in British official circles for a closer supervision over the affairs of the Dogra kingdom.

The government of India had since 1852 maintained an officer on special duty in Srinagar during the summer, whose duty it was to control the officers and other British subjects who came to hunt in the vale and the lands beyond. As early as 1869, Dr Cayley in Leh had suggested the establishment of a residency in Srinagar,[59] but it was not until 1873 that the proposal was given serious consideration. H.L. Wynne, the officer on special duty, had been approached by a Russian official in Yarkand who wished to open relations with Kashmir,[60] this report combined with the Khalikdar affair to bring Cayley's suggestion forcibly to mind.

Khalikdar was a Kashmiri trader who had returned to Srinagar supposedly bearing a request addressed to the Maharaja from the Russians, asking for the establishment of direct communications. The Maharaja reported the incident to the officer on special duty and, despite the Governor General's approbation of Ranbir Singh's conduct, it was decided that a more permanent British presence was necessary in the Dogra state, both at Srinagar and Leh.

'His Highness is doubtless aware,' C.U. Aitchison, the secretary to the government of India in the foreign department, had written,

> that communications with Russia are matters of imperial concern … and that direct correspondence between Russia and Cashmere would not be in keeping with the relations which subsist between the British Government and His Highness, and would give rise to complications of an inconvenient and even serious character.

Furthermore, Aitchison contended, 'Imperial interests in that quarter are of such vast importance that we cannot go on longer in the dark as to what takes place beyond the Cashmere Frontier'.[61]

The Viceroy was almost fully convinced that Ranbir Singh had been in communication with the Russians (which indeed was true), that he had advised them to advance on Sirikol (which probably was not), and that hence a residency in Srinagar was desirable;[62] but he put his case more subtly:

> …On account of the business connected with the Mission despatched to Yarkund for the conclusion of a Commercial Treaty, and the strengthening

of the good understanding that at present subsists with His Highness the Atalik Ghazi, His Excellency in Council has resolved to instruct Mr. Wynne [Srinagar] and Mr. Shaw [Leh] to remain in their respective posts for the whole of the year, and in view of the important position of His Highness' territories on the North-Western frontier of British India, the increasing importance attached to political affairs in Central Asia, the necessity of obtaining early and reliable information of all that takes place beyond the Himalayan passes, the mischief caused by the circulation of false or exaggerated rumors from those quarters, and the closer relations which will, His Excellency in Council trusts, be established with Yarkund, it appears to His Excellency in Council to be advisable that a British Resident should remain permanently at the Court of His Highness ... The Resident will be appointed by the Government of India, but no change is contemplated in the conduct of political relations of the Government of India with Cashmere which will be conducted as heretofore through the Lt. Gov. [of the Punjab] to whom the Resident in Cashmere will be subordinate...[63]

Every effort was to be made to assure the Maharaja that the resident was to concern himself *only* with the external relations of British India.[64]

The proposal to establish a residency in Kashmir prompted considerable discussion in both the inner circles of the government of India and at the India Office. In Calcutta, Aitchison contended that rumours of Ranbir Singh's approaches to the Russians and the established fact of his attempting, in violation of his treaty obligations, to establish a separate relationship with Yarkand, pointed to the necessity 'of having a permanent Resident, the very best man we can get, in Cashmere. Imperial interests in the quarter area of such vast importance that we cannot go on longer in the dark as to what takes place beyond the Cashmere Frontier'.[65]

Where the members of the Governor General's council tended to agree with Aitchison,[66] no such unanimity was apparent in London. At the India Office, Sir John Kaye,[67] the secretary to the India Office's secret and political department, and Sir B. Frere[68] and Sir E. Perry,[69] two members of the India Office's political committee, rallied to the support of their Indian counterparts. They emphasized that the positive aspects of a residency should be pointed out to the Maharaja. He would be protected against irresponsible young lordlings who came to hunt, by the presence of a British officer, who was not just a 'bird of passage.' Rawlinson, who also sat on the committee, inferred from the

correspondence extant, that further evidence of the Maharaja's complicity in the murder of Hayward had been obtained. 'We must infallibly sooner or later have a permanent Resident in Cashmere,' he wrote to Northbrook, 'and I confess that, as far as my own views go, I should wish sooner *rather* than later…'.[70]

On the other hand, three members of the committee, Sir R. Montgomery,[71] Sir F. Currie,[72] and Sir G. Clerk[73] disapproved of the proposed plan as being in violation of the treaty concluded with Gulab Singh. The greater independence of Kashmir, Clerk thought, would better serve British interests.[74] Lord Argyll himself wrote to Northbrook:

> …I cannot help feeling great doubts about your appointing a permanent Resident at Cashmere. Of course, if you really have ground to suspect the Rajah of treachery to us, it may be a necessity, but short of that there are many objections. Sir Frederick Currie declares that…in no case do we have permanent Residents except when our rights to have them is given by treaty. I have not looked into this to see whether it is universally true, but there can be no doubt that the placing of such Residents in Native Courts is virtually a penal measure…[75]

Ranbir Singh strongly resisted the establishment of a residency. He claimed that his honour and that of his government would be seriously compromised.[76] When Sir Robert Davis, the lieutenant-governor of the Punjab, met with the Maharaja, he reported to Northbrook Ranbir Singh's great sense of humiliation at the proposed diminution of the dignity of his state. The Maharaja contended that interference with internal policy would be inevitable and twice stated his readiness, if required, to allow one of his sons to be detained in British territory as a hostage. This is of course only a *façon de parler* expressive of his mortification.[77] Finally, the Maharaja claimed that a residency would violate his father's understanding with the government of India,[78] and Sir Frederick Currie, when contacted in London, bore out the desperate ruler's contention:

> …I cannot at this distance of time remember the *words* that passed between us, but undoubtedly the *understanding* was distinct that, so long as he was loyal, there should be no Resident imposed upon him. This was determined by Lord Hardinge after full consideration of this very point with Lawrence and myself before I drafted the treaty.[79]

Faced with such evidence, Northbrook could only acquiesce to a compromise proposed by the Maharaja—that the British joint commissioner in Leh would remain throughout the year and that the officer on special duty in Srinagar (now to be largely a political agent) would continue at his post for eight months instead of six.[80] But the government of India was not to forget the rebuff it had received from a native prince.

The internal affairs of Kashmir always provided fertile ground for investigation and for a denunciation of the inequities of Dogra rule. A deep economic depression hit the valley in 1873, brought about by the essential disappearance of the demand for Kashmir shawls due to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. During the halcyon days of Napoleon III, shawls were sold for prices ranging from ten to one hundred pounds, but now they went unpurchased in London and in Paris (where all of a consignment worth £4,000 remained on the shelves). The Maharaja therefore turned to carpet-making and sericulture and sent one of his subjects to study the art of silk reeling in France and Italy.[81] Wynne had suggested carpet-making as a means of bolstering the economy, and pointed out to his superiors in the Punjab that the various missions to and from Yarkand had proved a considerable drain on Kashmir's resources at the same time as there had been a slight decrease in the number of British visitors to the valley.[82]

But the lieutenant-governor, although expressing appreciation for the Maharaja's efforts in land reform, was unsympathetic to the state's dilemma. He chose to emphasize Kashmir's land assessment system, the provisions of which entitled the Kashmir government to 62 per cent of the gross product based on the average of sixteen years' yield, from which figure remissions of one-sixth, one-fifth or one-fourth were granted, depending on the circumstances of each village. Under the most favourable conditions, the lieutenant-governor contended, the exaction was still three times the maximum collected in the Punjab, and even excessive in comparison with the rather stringent Hazara settlement.[83] But the time was not ripe in 1873 to gain much advantage from the domestic situation in Kashmir, nor did the great famine of 1877 allow further significant intervention. The government of India's opportunity was, however, to come. In the meantime, the authorities in Calcutta limited themselves to establishing a greater influence over the northern reaches of the state, through which it was thought any Russian invading army, or even a small force, would have to pass. It was now

clear that both in London and India, the pendulum had swung from relative complacency about Russian intentions to acute concern.

Thus, after three successive opponents of Indian expansion, the viceregal power was about to be assumed by an outspoken prophet of the 'forward school,' Lord Lytton.[84] Even before he assumed office in April 1876, Lytton had written to Salisbury at the India Office privately:

> ...I have often been told by persons whom I believe to be competent judges of Russian sentiment, that the very word Cashmere exercises a powerful charm over the Muscovite Imagination....[85]

'By the personal testimony of British officers,' an India Office minute paper of 29 July 1875, read,

> we are gradually learning about what ought to be a subject of serious consideration with the Govt. of India—that Gilgit is the best road from India to central Asia; that we should have an agent in that district....[86]

On 17 and 18 November, Lord Lytton met with the Maharaja, whom he claimed 'to have in my pocket'[87] at Mahdopore. He made it perfectly clear to him that he wanted Chitral and Yasin, with British 'countenance and material aid,'[88] to come under the effective control of Srinagar—a proposition to which Ranbir Singh agreed.[89] Lytton then expressed his wish to station a British officer at Gilgit.

This proposal was not new, having first been mooted by Forsyth in 1874, but to the Maharaja it evidently came as a complete surprise.[90] In a letter to Lytton, Ranbir Singh, on 26 November, questioned Lytton's assurance that the British officer to be stationed in Gilgit would not involve himself in the internal affairs of Kashmir. He referred to his unhappy experience with Dr Henry Cayley, who while British joint commissioner in Leh, had frequently interfered with the Kashmir authorities in Ladakh, and had even superseded the Maharaja's orders. Moreover, even when the Maharaja had complained to the government of India, Cayley had not been reprimanded. Ranbir Singh insisted that the prerogatives of the proposed official be clearly defined and that he be distinctly ordered to abstain from claiming jurisdiction in local matters.[91] To these requests Lytton acceded, and Ranbir Singh, as a consequence, had no choice but to agree to the British proposals. As a sign of goodwill, Lytton sent the Maharaja a present consisting of

500 rifles with ammunition and a completely equipped battery of mountain artillery.[92]

On 4 January 1877, the *vakils* (emissaries) of Chitral and Yasin met with officials of the government of India in Delhi, and were informed of the impending appointment of a British soldier, Captain Biddulph as it happened, was the officer assigned to special duty in Gilgit. The vakils accepted the news with good grace and loudly exclaimed that their territory was now the possession of the Maharaja of Kashmir.

On 15 May 1877 the Viceroy informed the Maharaja that the mehtar of Chitral, Aman-ul-Mulk, should be clearly informed that as a result of the official acceptance of Kashmir's suzerainty, he was not at liberty to exchange it for that of Kabul, as many suspected had been the wont, not only of Chitral but of most of the hill states in the past.[93] By a treaty of October 1877, the mehtar officially entered into an offensive and defensive alliance with the Maharaja, to whom he promised allegiance in return for a yearly subsidy of 100,000 Srinagar rupees[94] with an additional grant of Rs. 2,000 for his son Nizam-ul-Mulk.[95]

Ranbir Singh was in an unenviable position. He knew he was totally dependent on British goodwill and that there were many officials in the government of India who would favour the annexation of his state to British India. He was also aware that the increased responsibility he was being forced to assume in the environs of Gilgit and Chitral would only benefit the British and embroil him in conflicts with which past history had proved he could not adequately cope. Aman-ul-Mulk of Chitral had frequently aroused the tribes against Kashmir. Although a Dogra force had defeated Yasin in 1863, a combination of Aman-ul-Mulk, Mir Wali of Yasin, Tangir, Darel, and Hunza had in 1863–64 forced the Kashmiri troops out of the region and had almost captured Gilgit itself.[96]

The Russo-Turkish War of 1877 followed by a new Russian movement in the direction of India and an attempt by St. Petersburg to enter into alliance with Afghanistan, brought Lytton's latent Russophobia to full flower. '…I cannot doubt,' he wrote to Northbrook,

> the strength of what appears to be … [the] general impression that our Raj has been seriously weakened by the course of events elsewhere and that Russia if she does not rapidly become dictateress of the destinies of Hindostan, as well as of the Mediterranean East, must inevitably ere long be felt in India as a very real political force, a force antagonistic to ours which must be either resisted or appeased, and which will bring into play a whole new series of political combinations and provocatives to intrigue by

> presenting the Native dynasties with a possibility to selection between two rival candidates (of more or less equal strength) for the ultimate supremacy for the East.[97]

Russian World of 12 May 1877, remarked that Lytton, being a novelist, had a romantic mind—a dangerous trait in a statesman, 'but it is an inalienable appendage to Russophobia'.[98] Sher Ali, the Amir of Kabul, if he was not a friend of Great Britain, was in Lytton's eyes, surely a dangerous potential enemy. 'A tool in the hands of Russia', the Viceroy wrote, 'I will never allow him to become. Such a tool it would be my duty to break before it could be used'.[99]

On 9 September, in the minutes to the secretary of state, Lord Cranbrook, Lytton contended that all the passes were in the hands of hostile tribes:

> ...I conceive, then, that it would be simply suicidal to allow Russia to establish herself peaceably and securely in Kabul...We cannot rely on her friendship; and the rich plains of India might prove too alluring bait to the occupiers of the barren and profitless mountains of Afghanistan.[100]

The Viceroy asserted that the Afghans would join the Russians in an invasion of India. '...Beyond these mountains we should meet Russia at a disadvantage; while the passes leading into India are so few, so long, and so difficult that they would easily be stopped if occasion required.'[101] Now totally engaged Lytton continued:

> ...From the Karakorum to the Baroghil Pass, therefore, our ultimate boundary should be the great mountain range or watershed; and our officers in Cashmere have accordingly been instructed, whilst endeavouring to extend our influence over the petty chieftains along the southern slopes of this ridge, to avoid interference with the tribes beyond it.
>
> ...To sum up then. As a purely military line, the strongest frontier we could take would be along the Hindu-Kush from the Pamir to Barnian, holding the northern debouches of the principal passes; and thence, southward by the Helmund, Girishk, and Candahar to the Arabian Sea.[102]

Meanwhile, the Russians, in reaction to the setbacks faced by their designs in Europe at the Congress of Berlin, forced a mission on Sher Ali of Kabul in 1878, and although the Russian party withdrew under British pressure, it was too late. Lytton was determined on war with Afghanistan, and late in 1878 hostilities erupted. With a heavy heart,

Gladstone, then in opposition but largely reflecting the sentiments of the ruling Conservatives as well, rose in Parliament to condemn Lytton's Afghan policy: 'We made war in error upon Afghanistan in 1838,' he thundered.

> To err is human and pardonable. But we have erred a second time on the same ground and with no better judgment…This error has been repeated in the face of every warning conceivable and imaginable, and in the face of an unequaled mass of authorities. It is proverbially said that history repeats itself, and there has rarely been an occasion in which there has been a nearer approach to identity than in the case of the present and former wars…May heaven avert the omen! May heaven avert a repetition of the calamity which befell our army in 1841.[103]

But the Second Afghan War was almost as catastrophic as the first, and the conclusion of yet another disastrous intervention into the affairs of Afghanistan combined with the ineffectiveness of the British presence in Gilgit to prompt the Viceroy to perform a complete *volte face* and to revert to Mayo's position of 1870. Concomitantly, Kashmir's inability to control its unruly feudatories, evidence of the State's continued correspondence with Russia and Afghanistan,[104] and the ill grace with which the officers on special duty in Gilgit, Leh and Srinagar were countenanced[105] forced Lytton

> …to the conclusion that the Maharaja should now be relieved of all responsibilities and deprived of all powers, in regard to Chitral and Yasin; that he should be simultaneously relieved of the small subsidy he pays to the Mir of Chitral, and of the unwelcome presence of a British Officer at Gilgit…and that His Highness should be plainly told that, henceforth, he will neither be required, nor permitted to meddle with the affairs of any State, great or small, beyond the Kashmir frontier.[106]

With regard to the internal government of the State, Lytton was tempted to depose the Maharaja. '…An immense amount of secret, but sufficiently detailed information has come into our hands,' he wrote Cranbrook at the India Office.

> shewing that Kashmir has abused our confidence, that he has been working not for, but against us; that for many years past he had been in treasonable correspondence with Russia, Kabul, and Nepal; and that he has done his utmost to thwart all our efforts for the establishment of amicable relations with Sher Ali and Yakub Khan…[107]

But the Viceroy stayed his hand as he considered Ranbir Singh's eldest son even worse than his father, and because he was worried about the effect the deposition would have on Indian public opinion. He did, however, intend to invite the Maharaja to Simla and to force him to accept a resident, revise the land assessment, dismiss corrupt officials, reform his administration, and open more roads.[108]

While the Viceroy was in the process of defining a new policy towards the northern regions, and while the negotiations to end the Afghan War were still in progress, the Conservatives were swept out of office in what was, among other things, a massive repudiation of Lytton's frontier policy and of his support of the 'forward school.' To mark the end of an era, the new Liberal secretary of state for India, Lord Hartington, wrote to the recently appointed Liberal Viceroy, the Marquess of Ripon:

> ...Thus it appears that, as the result of two successful campaigns, of the employment of an enormous force, and the expenditure of large sums of money, all that has yet been accomplished has been the disintegration of the State which it was desired to see strong, friendly and independent, the assumption of fresh unwelcome liabilities in regard to one of its provinces, and a condition of anarchy throughout the remainder of the country.

His Majesty's Government's first objective was to be the return of the invading troops to India and the restoration of a friendly, independent Afghanistan.[109] A few British statesmen, such as Sir Louis Mallat, the permanent under-secretary at the Foreign Office, saw to the heart of the Afghan problem: 'It is superfluous to observe,' he wrote to Hartington,

> that the only interest which the Government of India possesses in the affairs of Afghanistan is derived from the notion of its liability to Russian influence.
>
> ...If, therefore, this cause of disturbance in Indian politics is to be removed, it is only to be done by placing the relations of England and Russia in Central Asia on a different footing. Whatever may be thought of the success of any such attempt, there can, I think, be only one opinion as to its importance. For my part, I do not hesitate to say that, so long as the condition of mind in which the Government of India has been carried on during recent peace continues, all rational hope of grappling with the problem of the India Government must be abandoned...[110]

Kashmir was thus, at least for the moment, once again saved from further British incursions and attacks on its autonomy. As it turned out the reprieve was only temporary.

NOTES

1. Rawlinson, of course, had his Russian counterpart. In 1856, while the Crimean War was still in progress, General Khruloff had drawn up a plan for the invasion of India. Apparently, the Foreign Office did not obtain a copy of Khruloff proposal until 1878, at which time it was probably out of context. India Office Library (IOL), Secret Home Correspondence, Foreign Office to India Office, 10 June 1878.
2. IOL, Sec. Home Correspondence, notes on a proposed campaign in Asia by Sir Henry Rawlison, December 1859.
3. IOL, Political Correspondence, No. 15, 23 January 1867.
4. IOL, Pol. 121, 9 July 1867.
5. IOL, Secret Correspondence, No. 47, 15 May 1865, enclosure 3, extract from Kabul Diary of 10–13 March 1865.
6. IOL, Pol. 15, 23 January 1867.
7. IOL, Pol. 162, 23 October 1867.
8. Ibid., Minutes by Lumsden.
9. Ibid.
10. IOL, Pol. 19, 24 January 1867.
11. IOL, Sec. Home Corres., Conf. 67, Caroley, Paris to Russell, 12 January 1865. Gorchakov's perception also became known as the theory of the turbulent frontier.
12. Ibid.
13. P.R. Zade, 'Political Relations Between India and Central Asia in the Second Half of the 19th Century,' *Central Asian Review*, vol. XII, no. 3, 1964, pp. 219–27.
14. National Archives of India (NAI), sec. Procs. 127-132, no. 131, K [eep]—W[ith]—note by T.H. Thornton, 5 May 1877.
16. IOL, Pol. 1, 4 January 1869.
17. IOL, Pol. Memos, C 5 memo by Lawrence, 25 November 1868.
18. IOL, India Office, Secret and Political Dept. no. XV, 16 December 1872.
19. 'Remarks by Major-General Sir Henry Rawlinson,' Proceedings of the *Royal Geographical Society*, vol. XI (1867), p. 165.
20. IOL, Pol. (Sec.) 177, 3 June 1869.
21. Ibid.
22. IOL, Sec. 13, 11 October 1869, Encl. 13, notes by R.B. Shaw on a pamphlet entitled, 'Russian Advances in Asia.'
23. IOL, Sec. 41, 7 December 1869.
24. IOL, Sec. 99, 16 October 1866, Sec. 24, 17 May 1870.
25. IOL, Sec. 24, 17 May 1870, Encl. 6, C.U. Aitchison, Off. Sec. to the Govt. of Indian the Foreign Department to T.H. Thornton, Sec. to the Govt. of the Punjab, 16 May 1870.
26. IOL, Sec. 34, 10 June 1870, Encl. 4, Aitchison to Hayward, 10 June 1870.

27. IOL, Sec. 50, 9 September 1870.
28. Ibid., enclosure, Thornton to Aitchison, 27 August 1870.
29. IOL, Sec. 76, 12 October 1872.
30. IOL, Sec. 27, 20 May 1870.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. Ibid.
34. IOL, Sec. 28, 26 May 1871.
35. IOL, Sec. 4, 19 January 1872.
36. Ibid.
37. For instance, the conclusion of the Russo-Chinese Treaty in 1869, superseding that of 1862, aroused British suspicion. Its provisions allowed the Russians numerous privileges, such as free trade within thirty-three miles off the Russo-Chinese border and in Chinese Mongolia.
38. IOL, Sec. 27, 20 May 1870.
39. IOL, Sec. 28, 26 May 1871.
40. IOL, Sec. and Pol. Memos, A-82 (conf. 1891)—Note by Sir Stewart Bayley on the Pamir Question and the North-East Frontiers of Afghanistan.
41. Due to the resulting anarchy, the Russians in 1871 occupied the upper Ili Valley, though they assured the Chinese that this was a purely temporary expedient which would be reversed once the Chinese reasserted their control in Eastern Turkestan.
42. IOL, Pol. 195, 8 December 1866.
43. Robert Shaw, *Visits to High Tartary, Yarkand and Kashgar* (London, 1871), pp. 356–57.
44. Ibid., p. 469.
45. Ibid., pp. 462–77.
46. Of course, Shaw and Hayward were not the first westerners to penetrate Eastern Turkestan across the Himalayan passes. The interest of the British public was initially aroused by the journey of Adolphe Schlagentweit, the noted scientist and traveller, who arrived in Kashgar in 1857, in the midst of the revolt raised by Khoja Wali Khan, by whom he was subsequently murdered. The Russian Lieutenant Valikhanoff travelled to Kashgar in 1859 in the guise of a trader, and in 1865, W.R. Johnson of the Great Trigonometrical Survey visited Khotan as a guest of the ruler Habibulla Padshah, who wanted to tender allegiance to the British government in return for military aid against Russia. To encourage British cooperation, he drew attention to the possibilities for a safe trade route between Khotan and India. But although the British government expressed a desire for friendly relations with Khotan, they were not willing to establish them at the cost of increased political and military responsibilities. (IOL, Pol. 43, Lawrence to Ripon, 8 March 1866)
47. IOL, Sec. 330, 11 October 1869, enclosure 4, India to Punjab, 6 October 1869.
48. Ibid.
49. Dr Henry Cayley, not surprisingly, became the first British Joint-Commissioner. He had in 1867 first been appointed Agent in Leh by a reluctant government—an appointment that was renewed annually until he became Joint-Commissioner. Lawrence had thought that as Cayley was a doctor, his appointment might be less onerous to Ranbir Singh than that of a political officer.
50. IOL, Pol. 212, 4 October 1870, Enclosure 5, Cayley to Punjab, 30 July 1870.

51. Ibid.
52. It must be noted the Yakub Beg was already very severely threatened by the Chinese at the time of his death. Even had he lived, a Chinese reconquest would probably have occurred.
53. For a detailed discussion of the affairs of Eastern Turkestan in the period 1865–1895, see G.J. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier, 1865-1895* (London, 1963), Chapter 2.
54. IOL, Sec. 48, 28 July 1874, Enclosure, Forsyth to Aitchison, 16 May 1874.
55. Ibid.
56. NAI, Sec. Procs., 5–11, March 1875, proc. 11.
57. Ibid., Proc. 8.
58. NAI, Sec. Procs. 19–29, March 1875.
59. IOL, Argyll Papers, reel 312, Cayley to Major Burne, 26 August 1869.
60. IOL, Sec. 73, 15 September 1873, enclosure 2, H.L. Wynne, Officer on Special Duty, Srinagar, to Thornton, 25 July 1873.
61. NAI, Sec. Procs. 19–29, March 1875, K.W., February 1875.
62. IOL, Northbrook Papers, J. Lawrence to Northbrook, 21 February 1873.
63. Ibid., Northbrook to R.H. Davis, 14 March 1873.
64. NAI, Sec. Procs. 14–24, proc. 23, Aitchison to Thornton, 12 September 1873.
65. Ibid. K. W. Aitchison, 11 February 1875.
66. Northbrook, himself, would, in addition to a resident in Kashmir, also have liked to see British Residents in Kabul, Kandahar, and Herat, and a British officer to inspect the northern and western boundaries of Afghanistan. IOL, Sec. 75, 15 September 1873.
67. IOL, India Office memo by Kaye, 25 November 1873, attached to IOL, Sec. 75, 15 September 1873.
68. Ibid., Memo by Frere, 7 November 1873.
69. Ibid., Memo by Perry, 6 November 1873.
70. IOL, Northbrook Papers, Rawlinson to Northbrook, 24 July 1874.
71. India Office Memo by Montgomery, 30 October 1873. Attached to IOL, Sec. 75, 15 September 1875.
72. Ibid., Memo by Currie, 31 October 1873.
73. Ibid., Memo by Clark, 2 November 1873.
74. Ibid.
75. IOL, Northbrook Papers, Argyll to Northbrook, 28 November 1873.
76. NAI, Sec. Procs. 1929, March 1875.
77. Ibid., K.W., strictly confidential, Davies to Northbrook, 7 December 1873.
78. Ibid., Northbrook to Davies, 27 December 1873.
79. Ibid., India Office, Currie to Argyll, 27 November 1873. Lord Salisbury felt constrained to question the conduct of imperial affairs 'by unsupported recollections of aged civilians as to the unauthorised pledges they gave in conversation a quarter of a century before.' Salisbury to Northbrook, 24 April 1874. Quoted in D.K. Ghose, 'The Kashmir Residency Question (1846-1885),' *The Quarterly Review of Historical Studies*, Calcutta, vol. VIII, no. 4, 1967–68.
80. NAI, Sec. Procs., 19–29, Northbrook to Davies, 24 March 1874.
81. IOL, Pol. 1-c, 24 March 1874.
82. IOL, Pol. 45, 27 February 1874, enclosure H.L. Wynne to Thornton, 29 December 1873.

83. NAI, Procs. of the Honorable the Lt.-Gov. of the Punjab, For. Dept. 132, 14 January 1874.
84. Lord Lytton was Viceroy from 1876 to 1880.
85. IOL, Lytton Papers, letters dispatched v. 1, Lytton to Salisbury, 14 March 1876.
86. The India Office was, however, inclined to work through the Maharaja of Kashmir, whom it described as 'one of our most loyal feudatories.' India Office minute paper of 29 July 1875, on IOL, sec. 22, 21 June 1875.
87. IOL, Lytton Papers, Lytton to Rawlinson, 5 August 1876.
88. British Museum, Kimberley Papers, 43574, LXXXIV, K.W. 380–389, 6 June 1881. Hunza and Nagar were also covered by this guarantee.
89. NAI, Sec. Procs., 30-60B, July 1877, proc. 38, app. V.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid., Maharaja to Viceroy, 26 November 1877.
92. NAI, Sec. Procs. 30-60B, July 1877, Proc. 38, App. 5.
93. NAI, Sec. Procs. 30-60 B, July 1877, proc. 38, app. V.
94. A Srinagar rupee was valued at half a Calcutta rupee. The latter was stabilized at 1s. 4d. in 1899.
95. NAI, Sec. Procs. 60–79, November 1877, proc. 76.
96. IOL, Sec. 77, 11 June 1877, section XIII.
97. IOL, Northbrook Papers, v. 14, Lytton to Northbrook, 25 April 1878.
98. NAI, Sec. Procs., 141–142, abstract 23, 24 May 1877.
99. H.H. Dodwell and R.R. Sethi, *Cambridge History of India* (Delhi, 1964), VI, p. 416.
100. IOL, Sec. 79, 9 September 1878.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid.
103. P.E. Roberts, *History of India* (London, 1952), p. 441.
104. IOL, A.C. Lyall, Foreign Office to Col. Sir O.T. Burne, 25 February 1880.
105. That Ranbir Singh was unhappy with the British is not surprising. He was forced by the Government of India to absorb many expenses, such as road building, which he undertook only at Calcutta's insistence. When in 1876 Northbrook withdrew the prohibitions on Europeans visiting Kashmir in the winter, the Maharaja had bitterly complained and had forced a partial retraction. 'My officials,' he wrote, 'have to force coolies to labour for every English traveller from the moment of his entering my territory till he quits it and it is incumbent on my officials to abstract poor cultivators from their distant homes and fields for many days in order to make them carry loads of visitors…' IOL, Sec. Procs. 73–75, August 1877, proc. 74, Maharaja to Viceroy, 27 November 1876.
106. IOL, Lytton Papers, 518/4, Lytton to Lt. Gov. of the Punjab, 2 December 1879.
107. IOL, Lytton Papers, 518/6, Lytton to Cranbrook, 25 February 1880.
108. Ibid.
109. IOL, Pol. And Sec. Dispatches to India, Sec. of State to Viceroy, 21 May 1880.
110. IOL, Sec. and Pol. Memos, C. 84, Conf. Mallet to Hartington, 25 September 1850.

3

BRITISH PREPONDERANCE IN KASHMIR ESTABLISHED (1881–1888)

The heavy expenses of the Afghan War had prompted a reappraisal of the forward policy in the northern region of Kashmir State. The British abandoned their attempts to force Kashmir to exercise its weak rights of suzerainty over the unruly and anarchic states, such as Yasin, Punyal, Hunza and, Nagar, which lay beyond its normal sphere of control. The British also decided to withdraw the small garrison from Gilgit, although the government of India reserved the right to re-establish the post, if circumstances so dictated.[1]

Ranbir Singh despised the whole Gilgit arrangement and the British attempts to assert control over Kashmir's northern reaches through the state's fiat. But his health was deteriorating, and the prospect of his demise brought to the mind of officials in Calcutta the possibility of increasing British control in Srinagar, and by this means still keeping a hand on the affairs of the vital northern marches.

It was, of course, not a new concept. As previously indicated, the Franco-Prussian War undercut the demand for Kashmir shawls. The ensuing depression led to a severe famine at the end of the decade, which ravaged the valley and ostensibly forced 150,000 persons to flee the country.[2] The circumstances had allowed Lytton to write:

> The people are systematically oppressed and depressed; the administration thoroughly rotten; the land settlement vicious; the officials corrupt and unscrupulous; and their pay in arrears. The Maharaja is not a bad or inhumane man but he is weak, not very capable and like most oriental princes sly. He mistrusts his officials, they him... A famine equal in intensity to the last, is expected this year. No provision has been made for it. Nothing has been done, and apparently without strong intervention on our part, nothing can, or will, be done to remedy this bad state of affairs.

> Kashmir is the great border state of India. It lies along that part of our frontier where the importance of our trans-frontier interests is greatest, and most rapidly increasing. It is administered by a feudatory prince at whose court we keep no regular Resident and over whose proceedings we have hitherto exercised very little control… I consider the time has come when we must decisively intervene for the rescue of a perishing population, on whose behalf we certainly contracted moral obligations and responsibilities when we handed them over to the uncontrolled rule of a power alien to them in race and creed, and representing no civilisation higher than theirs.[3]

Edward Prinsep, a settlement officer familiar with the situation in Kashmir, disagreed with the Viceroy. He contended that the Maharaja was thoroughly loyal to the British, that the problem of feeding 20,000 to 30,000 troops, which were maintained on the frontier at the behest of the Government of Indian was a great strain on the State's resources. He believed that Ranbir Singh had done the best he could at a time when there was a great depression in the shawl and pashmina trade in Europe; a disaster largely the fault of shoddy products manufactured in the Punjab by Kashmiri immigrants. Besides the Maharaja had never been reimbursed for the expenses he incurred in the Afghan campaign. He was the constant victim of depredations by British hunters and tourists. Prinsep urged that a moratorium be declared on the payment of 16 *lakhs* owed by Kashmir to the Punjab for grain, that the Maharaja should be encouraged rather than ridiculed in the press, and that two British advisors should be sent to Kashmir to work with Ranbir Singh in a friendly spirit.[4]

Lord Cranbrook, the secretary of state for India, tended to agree with the Viceroy. He was incensed at the treatment of the Muslim population by the Hindu Dogras. 'It is true,' he admitted,

> that we are not directly responsible, but we have relations with Cashmere which would justify strong interference with their enormities and the use of a tone which ought to have its effect… We ought to have influence to prevent the annihilation of a race whose only crime is a different religion from that of the powers in authority….[5]

Now on 7 April 1884, Lord Ripon, the Viceroy, wrote to Lord Kimberley, who had succeeded to the office of secretary of state for India:

> The three principal facts which it is necessary to notice are that the death of the Maharaja Ranbir Singh is apparently near at hand; that the

> administration of the Kashmir State is so thoroughly disorganised as to threaten a complete breakdown; and that the heir-apparent to the Chiefship is said to be unfitted in character and habits to govern the State... In our judgment, the time has now come for determining the course which the British Government should adopt on the death of the Maharaja; and we therefore, proceed to lay our views before your Lordship...

Ripon recommended that Mian Partab Singh, the Maharaja's eldest son, be allowed to assume the reins of government and that his supposed vices be ignored, 'unless they have reduced him to a condition of utter incapacity,' which did not appear to be the case. With the succession of the new chief, the Viceroy urged a programme of reform in the administration of Kashmir, which should be accomplished whether the Maharaja approved or not. To facilitate the amelioration of existing conditions, the officer on special duty should be raised to the level of resident political officer, supported by a state council, and spend the entire year in the state.

> Such a change would probably be welcomed by the people of Kashmir... It is a measure which may be called for, not merely by the need of assisting and supervising administrative reforms, but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the northwestern frontier of Kashmir.[6]

The words of Lord Argyll, who had written to Northbrook on the same subject in 1873, seemed to have been conveniently forgotten.[7] Ripon insisted that:

> ... any disturbance which continued mis-government might create in Kashmir would be acutely felt on the frontiers of Afghanistan; the connexion between Kashmir and its dependent Chiefships would in all probability be severed; and grave political complications might easily ensue. We have therefore to consider the necessity for providing for efficient political supervision, not merely in the interests of the people of Kashmir, but also in the interests of the people of India...[8]

Minuting by Sir William Lee-Warner on the Viceroy's council repeated an oft-told tale: 'We have heard from many sources the rumour of Russian intrigues; whispers have been current that the Maharaja of Kashmir was not to be trusted...'[9]

In his reply of 23 May, Kimberley supported the proposals for internal reform in Kashmir:

> It may, indeed, be a question, whether having regard to the circumstances under which the sovereignty of the country was entrusted to the present Hindoo ruling family, the intervention of the British Government on behalf of the Mahommedan population had not already been too long delayed....

The secretary of state also agreed to the appointment of a resident as, 'the course of events beyond the border... has materially increased the political importance of Kashmir...'.[10]

In September, Ranbir Singh died. Ripon immediately informed his successor of the change in status of the officer on special duty.[11] The new Maharaja was 'pained' at the news. 'I am able and willing of my own accord,' he wrote, 'to introduce and maintain such reforms as are calculated to entitle a ruler to the lasting gratitude of his subjects, and encourage approbation of the paramount power as well as the public at large.'[12]

The Viceroy, however, remained adamant in imposing the revised system on a ruler who was described by Sir Oliver St. John, now elevated to the dignity of resident, as

> entirely wanting in the quick wit of his father, [although] he has inherited a full share of his obstinacy and cunning. He will consent to certain surface reforms, but on the cardinal points of making a proper land settlement, he will, I fear, offer as much opposition as he dares.[13]

Sir Oliver St. John did, however, admit that the Maharaja had already mitigated or entirely removed several imposts and customs. The customs duty on rice and other provisions brought into Srinagar had been reduced from two annas a rupee to half an anna. In other words from 12.5 to 3.5 per cent. The heavy taxes on the sale of horses and on public conveyances had in one case been discontinued and in the other, substantially reduced. Forced enlistment in the state service had been essentially abolished.[14]

However, much more remained to be done. The resident was instructed as to the general lines of policy to be pursued. The position of European traders, the postal system, coinage, the procedure for extraditing criminals, the railways (or rather the lack of control of them) and roads—all were in need of attention and had to be replaced on a sounder footing. It would probably be necessary sometime in the future to place British troops within the Maharaja's territory to observe developments on the frontier.

Finally, the Maharaja should not be allowed to discourage Kashmiris from joining the Indian army.[15] The Viceroy wanted 'the introduction of a reasonably light assessment of land revenue'; the cessation of state monopolies; the construction of good roads; further revision of existing taxes and dues (especially transit dues and the numerous taxes upon the trades and professions); the abolition of tax farming; the appointment of respectable officials, 'if such exist,' and their regular payment; the establishment of a careful system of financial control; the removal of all restrictions on emigration; the reorganization and regular payment of the army; and the improvement of the judicial system[16]—a very demanding bill of particulars for any Indian prince. Would a Maharaja of Kashmir, even with the best will in the world, ever come close enough to fulfilling it to satisfy a demanding suzerain?[17] Time, and the imperatives of Imperial Indian foreign policy, would tell.

Meanwhile the Panjdeh incident of March 1885 and the very real danger of war with Russia over Afghanistan, prompted Lord Dufferin, who had assumed the viceregal office in December 1884, to send Colonel W.S.A. Lockhart, by the middle of the next year, to once more examine the whole of the northern region.[18]

Lockhart was accompanied by a considerable escort including an experienced surveyor, a doctor, an intelligence officer, and an armed contingent of men from his own regiment. His prime duties were to thoroughly investigate the passes over the Hindu Kush into Wakhan and Badhakshan, as well as the passes into Kafiristan, to establish friendly relations with all local chiefs, and to explore the country under the Hindu Kush.[19]

Lockhart's orders were, 'to determine to what extent India is vulnerable through the Hindu Kush range between the Kilik Pass and Kafiristan'.[20] If the mission could get over the more important passes without attracting much attention, it was to do so.[21]

The small expedition left India in the summer of 1885, travelled through Kashmir and Gilgit[22] to Chitral. There the British party was warmly received by the mehtar, Aman-ul-Mulk, who was becoming progressively more worried about the aggressive tendencies of Abdur Rahman in Afghanistan, as the Amir's territorial ambitions clearly included Chitral. Lockhart negotiated a defensive agreement with Aman-ul-Mulk, under the terms of which the mehtar undertook to hold the northern passes leading into Chitral and to open a route south whenever a British force needed it.[23] Aman was now the bulwark of

British defences on the Indian side of the Hindu Kush and, as a consequence, his subsidy was doubled, while he himself requested a British officer be permanently stationed in his capitol.[24]

Having concluded his visit to Chitral, Lockhart explored the Dora Pass and Kafiristan, returning to Gilgit in time to spend the winter. In April 1886, Lockhart and his colleagues set out for Hunza, where they were on the whole well-received, although Ghazan Khan insisted on emphasizing his relationship to China.[25] He would not allow the party to pass until the Nagar forces in Chaprot had been removed and the post manned entirely by Kashmiri sepoys.

Next the expedition passed through the Kilik Pass onto the Taghdumbash and Little Pamirs, investigated the northern approach to the Baroghil Pass, and traversed the Kala Panja, Ishkashem, Zebak and Dora Passes on their way back to Chitral and Gilgit. All told, Lockhart and his men surveyed 12,000 square miles of largely uncharted territory and explored virtually every known pass through the Hindu Kush.[26]

In contrast to Biddulph's first report of some ten years previous, Lockhart did not find the Baroghil a viable path to India from the other side of the Hindu Kush. '…it does not lead to Gilgit or anywhere else by any practicable route for pack animals. It is cut off from Tasih and Gilgit…'[27]

The Dora Pass, on the other hand, was judged capable of passage by wheeled vehicles after comparatively little labour. Nevertheless, Lockhart deprecated any real danger of a large army crossing the passes of the Hindu Kush. The periods when roads were not made impassable by either snow or floods, were just too brief.

But if Russia's ordered battalions could not traverse the northern mountain barrier, small, lightly-armed bands could certainly do so in the spring and autumn. To guard against this contingency, Lockhart once more proposed the establishment of a British presence in Gilgit. This time the garrison should consist of local levies formed into mobile scout detachments, led by nineteen British officers and supported by a Punjabi artillery battery.[28]

Changes in the *status quo* in Hunza and Nagar were to add urgency to Lockhart's recommendations. In November 1886, the Viceroy forwarded to London the news that Safdar Ali Khan had murdered his father, Ghazan Khan, and had assumed the rule of Hunza.[29] On 20 January 1888, a combined force of 2,000 men from Hunza and Nagar expelled the Kashmiri garrisons from Chaprot and Chalt and threatened Nomal, only fifteen miles from Gilgit itself.[30]

Although Nomal was not taken and the original position was restored, the incident was disquieting,[31] especially as Safdar Ali, despite having immediately tendered his allegiance to Kashmir, had entered into correspondence with China, and was rumoured to have a Chinese representative at his side.[32]

Lord Dufferin referred to the State, which previously had never really attracted much attention in Calcutta, and in a letter to the India Office, he wrote:

> Though a pretty State of not much military strength, Hunza is not without importance. From it, Chinese Turkistan can be reached by a pass or passes hitherto unexplored and immediately to the north across the Kilik Pass, lies the gap between Afghanistan and China. By pushing through this gap in however insignificant number(s), or by becoming successors of the Chinese in Kashgar, which can hardly again be an independent Mussulman power, the Russians might at any time, if the suzerainty of Kashmir were not previously established, acquire very inconvenient rights or claims over Kanjut [Hunza]. The country is, no doubt, rough and difficult, but the embarrassment caused by its turning to the Russians should nonetheless be material.[33]

The peaceful demarcation of Afghanistan's eastern frontier, formalized by a protocol signed in St. Petersburg in July 1887, might well have ushered in an era of Anglo-Russian amity in Central Asia, which would have seen the settlement of outstanding issues such as national jurisdiction in the lands to the north of India. For Herat, considered the key to India by many strategists, was definitely preserved to Afghanistan. However, the uncertainty in the Pamirs produced negative reactions far outweighing the positive effects of the settlement of the Afghan boundary from the Hari Rud to the Oxus. Every Russian in the region became a fit object of suspicion. 'A Russian officer with some attendants,' anxiously reported the Peshawar confidential diary, 'has been seen in the Pamir desert catching butterflies.'[34]

For some months, Sir Mortimer Durand, foreign secretary to the government of India, and one of Dufferin's closest friends and advisors, had been of the opinion that the Gilgit Agency would have to be restored and the British grip on the northern districts strengthened. In a persuasive memorandum of 21 May 1887, he strongly advocated a return to the forward policy. The road from Peshawar to Chitral via Dir should be opened and:

In respect of the mountainous tract along our frontier which does not own the supremacy of Kabul, my view is briefly that we should make arrangements without avoidable delay for transforming that great natural obstacle, which has hitherto been a barrier against ourselves, into a barrier against our enemies. We should enter into closer relations with the various tribes which hold it, from Chitral to Dera Ghazi Khan, and should endeavour while gaining their friendship to organise them in some degree for the purposes of defence.

A similar formula was prescribed for the tribes in the Hindu Kush region. Every effort should be made:

> To bring them under our influence, to open up their country as far as possible for the movement of our officers and troops, and to organize them for purposes of defence against any external enemy. This will cost money, how much I cannot say—but certainly a considerable yearly sum.[35]

As a consequence of this latest proposed change in policy, Captain Algernon Durand, the foreign secretary's younger brother, was dispatched on yet another mission to the Gilgit frontier. Durand made the usual rounds. He visited Chitral and its ruler Aman-ul-Mulk, host to a banquet in the British Emissary's honour, deeply shocked Durand by blowing his nose on a servant's turban![36]

'As I passed Gilgit,' Durand informed his brother, 'I heard that a Russian Officer had just been to Hunza.'[37] He was quite right; the officer was Captain Gromchevsky, who with a small escort found his way through the feared gap between the Pamirs and Chinese Turkestan. Thus, as Durand observed, 'the game had begun.'[38]

Pressure now rapidly increased for a return to a policy more reminiscent of Lytton's. T.C. Plowden, the resident in Kashmir, wrote the foreign secretary that the unrest in Hunza and Nagar. '…renders the revival of the Gilgit Agency and the introduction of a firm and stable policy a measure of primary importance.'[39]

Gromchevsky's visit to Hunza combined with a rumoured Chinese presence caused mounting alarm. On 21 June, Sir John Walsham, Her Britannic Majesty's ambassador to Peking, addressed Prince Ch'ing and the ministers of the Tsungli Yamen. He admitted that Hunza paid China an annual tribute of $1^{1}/_{2}$ ounces of gold dust, for which presents were given in return. So it was probably on this ground that the Chinese claimed the allegiance of the state. Walsham contended:

...but, whatever may be the foundation for the claim, I am convinced that the possibility of embarrassing questions arising will be best avoided by my notifying Your Highness and Your Excellencies that the Chief of Kuhjut [Hunza] has also long been a feudatory of Kashmir, receiving a yearly pension and paying tribute. It would be impossible therefore for the Indian Government to allow this petty border chieftain to create disturbances on Indian soil with impunity, and in reliance on his pretension to be a tributary State to the Chinese Empire.[40]

The Chinese saw fit to make no immediate reply. For the present moment that is, until a more appropriate moment to act presented itself, Hunza was to be ignored, if not forgotten. However, the question of Gilgit and the relationship of India with the northern regions as a whole, and with Kashmir specifically, could not wait. One of the reasons behind the failure of the first Gilgit Agency had been the undermining of its functions by a hostile Maharaja and durbar. Was the presence of a resident in Srinagar sufficient to guard against the repetition of such a dilemma?

From the start, the British resident made every effort to diminish the influence of the Maharaja in his own state and with the government of India. When Diwan Gobind Sahai replaced Diwan Anant Ram, who was suffering from a 'disorder of the brain',[41] as prime minister, and Babu Nilambut Mukerji became finance minister, Sir Oliver St. John, then the resident, wrote to Durand:

> ... The administration now formally inaugurated does not possess the confidence of the people or of the better class of officials, who would prefer to see the power entrusted to the Maharaja's brother in conjunction with Diwan Lachman Dass. It is felt that Gobind Sahai is notoriously corrupt and has, moreover, no experience in administrative work, while Babu Nilambut is rightly believed to be a mere theorist, anxious perhaps for reforms, but ignorant of how to carry them out, whose influence over the Maharaja is solely due to his ready invention of plausible pretexts for resisting the supremacy of the British Government and for evading compliance with its advice.
>
> 5. Neither is strong enough to check the influence exerted over the Maharaja by his favourites ... [For] the financial reform in the financial administration of the country which is its most essential want, it will, I fear, be useless to look to Babu Nilambut and Diwan Gobind Sahai...[42]

Curiously enough, Diwan Gobind Sahai was forced to resign his office due to ill health in early 1887. He was replaced by none other than

Diwan Lachman Das. Sahai was promptly accused of having embezzled Rs. 65,000 and was brought before a State Council filled with his enemies for trial.[43]

When the Maharaja objected to the possibility of British troops being stationed in Kashmir,[44] the Viceroy replied that if the Government of India felt such a move was necessary, 'I shall expect Your Highness as a loyal feudatory of the Queen-Empress to accept the decision with readiness and good-will.'[45]

The Maharaja's dismissal of Lachman Das, who was the nominee of the government of India, probably went a long way toward sealing his doom. In a letter, the purpose of which was clearly to prepare the ground for significant and far-reaching changes, Lord Dufferin wrote to the queen:

> The Ruler of Cashmere is a very weak and almost imbecile young man and completely under the influence of astrologers. Moreover, his private life is, even for a Native Prince, extremely disreputable... To give your Majesty ... a notion of the folly of the present Maharajah, Lord Dufferin may mention that one of his astrologers told him that he could ascertain whether his Father's spirit was angry with him or pleased by placing four gold mohurs at the four corners of his bedstead every night. If the old Maharajah approved of the proceedings, the mohurs would have disappeared by morning. It is needless to say that the spirit of the father scarcely ever evinced displeasure towards the son.[46]

Jogendra Chandra Bose, writing in his book, *Cashmere and Its Prince*, painted a somewhat different portrait. He spoke of Partab Singh taking

> an ardent interest in the welfare of his subjects. His subjects also hold him in great esteem and, notwithstanding the reverses that have recently come over him, cherish towards him feelings of deep devotion and loyalty. He takes a positive pleasure in transacting the business of the State. He is thoroughly loyal to the British Government and emulates his father in offering it his zealous services. Intelligent though not brilliant, open-handed though not ostentatious, he is alive to the responsibilities of his exalted rank and position. He possesses a quick sense of honour and is truthful and honest. He is exceedingly polite and courteous and mindful of the comforts of others, and I have known occasions when he preferred to put up with inconveniences rather than discomfort his attendants and servants...[47]

Both views were no doubt exaggerated. Dufferin's opinion was at least partially based on a report by Plowden, who failed to discover in Partab Singh,

> any sustained capacity for governing the country, or any genuine desire to ameliorate its condition, or to introduce those reforms which he has acknowledged to be necessary … I do not believe he is loyal … And I am convinced that the Government will commit a serious mistake if it believes that the reforms which the country urgently needs will ever be effected by Maharaja Pertab Singh… He will thwart and oppose it [the Government of India] in every way he dares; the only restraint will be the limit of his power and his fears;…

Plowden urged that the Maharaja be stripped of all powers so that, 'he may reign, but not govern.' The resident proposed a series of alternatives. The Maharaja's brother, Raja Amar Singh, could be appointed prime minister with a suitable British officer as 'a resolute and experienced adviser.' Or a prime minister could be imported from elsewhere. Finally, the existing state council (established at Dufferin's insistence in 1877) could be continued with the resident as its temporary head. 'Three years would suffice to set things straight, and the resident might then withdraw from the headship of the Council, and an administration be established on ordinary Native lines.'[48] Dufferin, who did not think very highly of Plowden, failed to approve the resident's plan to diminish the power of Partab Singh.[49]

On the other hand, he only sanctioned, with considerable trepidation, a scheme put forward by the Maharaja, placing himself at the head of the state council.[50] But as Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India wrote to the Viceroy:

> I am willing to sanction your proposal to give the Maharaja another occasion of proving whether His Highness possesses either the capacity or the will to introduce and carry into effect those administrative measures which are essential for the prosperity and security of the Kashmir State.[51]

In December 1888, Lord Lansdowne replaced Lord Dufferin as Viceroy. His opinion of Partab Singh was similar to his predecessor's. 'The Maharajah is a miserable creature,' he wrote to Lord Cross at the India Office, 'and quite unfit to govern his State.'[52]

Shortly after his arrival in India, Lansdowne appointed Colonel R. Parry Nisbet, 'a personal friend of the Maharaja, and an officer of

large administrative experience,'[53] to the residency in Srinagar. On 16 March, Nisbet wrote Durand a long report concerning some 'treasonable' correspondence by the Maharaja which had fallen into his hands. The documents in question, some thirty-four in number, were not letters to Russia or Afghanistan, but the inane scribbling of a superstitious paranoid.

> ... 6. From His Highness the Maharaja to Sheikh Mian Bux—You are wholly responsible for my life. My life is in your hands. Raja Ram Singh and Amar Singh are reporting to the Resident against me. You must make arrangements to kill them—when I shall be pleased...
>
> 14. From His Highness the Maharaja to Seth Ramanand—You said you would send the Hoshiarpur fortune-teller's forecasts and then value in this that they are adverse to the English. If you send him I'll pay one lakh of rupees or jewels to that value ...
>
> 18. Undertaking to pay one lakh of rupees or jewels of the value of Rs. 50,000 in S. 1950 to Seth Ramanand if a son is born to His Highness.[54]

When confronted with these letters, the Maharaja denied his guilt in an interview with the resident, who wrote, 'It seemed to me the Maharaja was not only frightened, but that he was thoroughly tired of the worry and trouble his officials had given him as he frequently repeated his intention to abandon the management of the State altogether.'[55] 'The conclusions the letters lead me to,' Plowden later wrote,

> are confirmed by certain rather extraordinary acts of the Maharaja in appointing unworthy and incapable persons to important offices of the State, ever since I took over charge, without consulting the proper counsellor, or in fact, any at all. The thing is the Maharaja is a timid and very superstitious man at the entire mercy of a set of unscrupulous scoundrels who take advantage of his fears and imbecility to plunder the State to any extent, and there appears to me weighty reasons for advising the practical setting aside of the Maharaja's authority.
>
> It surely is politically dangerous to leave the actual administration of this great State in the hands of an individual who may play us false at any moment without, perhaps, appreciating the disaster that would follow and, I believe, any steps Government may take short of annexation would be right and necessary, and generally approved by the princes and Chiefs of India.[56]

Durand in the foreign department was not pleased by Nisbet's conduct. He wished the resident had, rather than making a scandal of the letters,

based his contentions about the Maharaja on his record as ruler of the State.

> … The letters which have now been produced are not to my mind of a very startling character. We knew long ago that the Maharaja thought he had effected the death of his father by sorcery, and that he was consequently in the most abject fear of Seth Ramanand, who was the actual sorcerer. This man and Mecran Bux and one or two other low favourites did what they pleased with the weak minded chief, whose belief was that his father's ghost was constantly on the watch for him and that only their spell could ward off the danger and save him from being torn to pieces.
>
> We had heard rumours of money sent to Dalip Singh, and from time immemorial, Kashmir is said to have corresponded with Russia.
>
> If the letters are genuine, which I think they probably are, they teach us very little that is new about the Maharaja's character, and they reveal no treasonable conspiracy. Indeed the references to Russia and Dalip Singh rather tend to show that no practical communication has been carried on with either of them. I do not think that an officer who had seen anything of Native States would have attached so much importance to them as Colonel Nisbet has done. We have seen many such before …[57]

Lansdowne likewise did not attach much importance to the letters but, convinced of the danger of leaving Kashmir in the hands of an undependable ruler, he was willing to use them as, 'they strengthen our right to intervene…'.[58] He wrote to London that his Government had 'determined that the Maharaja's resignation shall be accepted, and that we should avail ourselves of the opportunity to effect a thorough re-organization of the Kashmir Government.'[59]

The Viceroy expanded on his views in a letter to the commander-in-chief, Sir Frederick Roberts:

> … The episode of the letters has been the occasion of our actions, but it is not the main justification of it. The Maharaja has, as you have no doubt heard, asked us to relieve him of the active conduct of his own government. This we are going to do by giving him a Council, and insisting that the Resident is to know what is going on. I am, however, very anxious to avoid creating the impression that we want to annex Kashmir, or that we desire publicly to degrade the Maharaja. We have told the Resident that, as far as outward appearances and signs of respect are concerned, no change is to be made and the Maharaja is still to be treated as the head of State. We have also told Colonel Nisbet to do what has to be done as quietly and unostentatiously as possible. Between ourselves, I think he is himself

> inclined to err on the other side, and that he made a needless commotion about the letters…[60]

On 8 March 1889, the Maharaja, in a letter to his brother, Raja Amar Singh, the prime minister designate, retired from public life and appointed a council, 'which for a period of five years will conduct all the public affairs of the State as they think best.' The members of the council were to be Rajas Ram Singh and Amar Singh (both brothers of Partab Singh's), an English member specially selected by the Government of India, Rai Bahadur Suraj Kaul and Rai Bahadur Bhag Ram. In case of a vacancy on the council, the Government of India would nominate a replacement.[61]

Durand would not approve of the appointment of an English member. He wrote:

> It is important to avoid as far as possible the appearance of annexing Kashmir. We have often been accused of a desire to do so. If the Native States came to believe that we were practically annexing the country their confidence would be shaken and the effect on their loyalty would be very serious indeed.[62]

Parry Nisbet, whose tendency towards precipitate action rendered him in Durand's eyes, 'a more or less dangerous experiment,'[63] was urged to 'remember that the Government of India has no desire to turn Kashmir into the semblance of a British district, or to place all administrative posts in the hands of Punjabi foreigners…'.[64]

As it finally turned out, the members of the council were Raja Ram Singh, who was placed in charge of the military department; Raja Amar Singh, who assumed control of the foreign department with jurisdiction over frontier affairs; Rai Bahadur Pundit Suraj Kaul, at the head of the revenue and finance departments; and Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram, in charge of the judicial department.[65] The controlling voice in the government of Kashmir would, however, be that of the resident.

Partab Singh had probably made his decision to resign under some duress, and on 14 May he wrote the Viceroy a rather pathetic letter asking for a restoration of his powers. 'in case this liberty is not allowed to me by the Supreme Government,' he concluded,

> and I have to remain in my present most miserable condition, I would most humbly ask your Excellency to summon me before you, and I would be

> most happy to obey such summons, and shoot me through the heart with your Excellency's hands, and thus at once relieve an unfortunate prince from unbearable misery, contempt, and disgrace forever.[66]

The Viceroy, however, remained unmoved.[67]

One only needs to read the lengthy report of the Kashmir settlement officer, A. Wingate, submitted to the Maharaja on 1 August 1888, to realize that there was much amiss with the internal administration of the state; whether the new council brought about a rapid amelioration of the situation is questionable. With the establishment of the Imperial Service Troops (Kashmiri troops available to the British) in 1888 and the consequent deputation of Lieutenant Colonel Neville Chamberlain to Srinagar to renovate the state's military apparatus, this arm of Kashmir's government was immeasurably raised in efficiency. But what about areas of more vital importance to the people of the state?

In June 1891, Captain H.I. Ramsey, British Joint Commissioner in Ladakh, wrote in his diary what in Lansdowne's words 'amounted to a condemnation of Colonel Nisbet's conduct of Kashmir affairs.'[68] Ramsey accused the council of inefficiency and corruption. He complained of slow postal and telegraph service and of an inadequate budget for Ladakh. '…we, in the exercise of our Imperial prerogative,' he wrote,

> …have possessed ourselves of the control of Kashmir State, and have introduced a horribly expensive Council … for introducing substantial reforms, which shall be for the benefit of the State and its peoples, and of establishing a respectable and simple administration, such as is suitable to the conditions and capabilities of a Native State, administered by a Native Prince.
>
> Instead of carrying out this honourable programme, those responsible persons, who have been placed by our Government at the head of the Kashmir administration, have calmly neglected the homely duties of internal reform, and while defrauding the public by issuing an inferior rupee coinage at par, and while leaving State servants and State debts unpaid, have unblushingly launched out upon a flashy and meretricious public works policy in the expectation, that the public in general, and the Government of India in particular, will in ignorance of the real state of affairs, extol their merits, and honourably decorate them for their services.
>
> It seems to me that officers, who can play such a part, must be regarded by thinking, and upright persons, as having betrayed their trust to the State placed in their charge, as having discredited the Government, and as having exhibited an appalling aptitude for political employment, especially in a

> bankrupt and moribund State like Kashmir, where a resuscitation can be hoped for only if the treatment applied to it be suitable, skilful, thorough, and above all things, transparently honest throughout from the great public question of Imperial interest down to the minutest detail of domestic life.[69]

What Ramsey had expressed was perilously close to insubordination. His charges were not investigated, although Nisbet, who had never been considered wholly satisfactory, was transferred. Ramsey himself was relegated to the Bhopawar Agency for his trouble with the recommendation that he be returned to the military department as soon as possible.[70]

Surprisingly, Nisbet had, in mid-1890, recommended 'the trial of a somewhat more indulgent policy towards the Maharaja...'[71] Lansdowne, however, convinced that the Maharaja was at the back of the growing demands for his restoration, was far from enthusiastic. '...Your suggestion,' Sir John Ardagh, Lansdowne's Private Secretary, wrote to Nisbet,

> that the time has come for adopting a more indulgent policy towards the Maharaja appears to be made on the assumption that the treatment which he has hitherto received at the hands of the Government of India has been other than indulgent. In his view, the Viceroy does not agree...[72]

Nisbet, in response, pointed out that the Maharaja was after all the legitimate ruler of the state, 'favourably regarded not only by his own Dogra clansmen in Jammu, but by the Kashmiri population of these territories...'[73] Yet, the Maharaja's total ostracism and exclusion from the affairs of State was never intended to be permanent, and he was in December 1891, subsequent to a visit to the Valley by the Viceroy, reinstated as president of the Council. His brother Amar Singh became vice-president.

This did not mean that Partab Singh received restoration of all his old powers. To the contrary, the new arrangement was only approved contingent on the Maharaja's placing a definite limit on his personal spending. He was not to interfere with the reforms initiated by the Council, nor act on any important matter independent of the resident.[74]

The Viceroy expected the State Council to adopt a proper method of audit and control (under the guidance of a British officer loaned to the Council); the reform of the *begar* or forced labour system; the prompt collection of revenue in cash instead of in kind; regular payment of troops and officials; efficient management of the State forests;

intelligent investment of State funds; and the elimination of the *modhikhana*—a kind of commissariat from which the Maharaja and other high state functionaries drew supplies in great quantities without payment.[75]

In September 1894, Lieutenant Colonel D.W.K. Barr, the new resident in Kashmir, reported to Calcutta that the Maharaja had requested the abolition of the Kashmir Council and his restoration as ruler with a minister whose appointment was subject to the approval of the government of India. Barr approved the proposal because he felt that Partab Singh was 'vicious and untruthful,' and sufficiently ruthless to have cowed the Council into ineffectiveness.

As the internal administration was now on a firm basis, Barr urged that Raja Sir Amar Singh be appointed minister, that the durbar should consist of the Maharaja, Raja Sir Amar Singh, and Raja Ram Singh, acting in consultation with the resident. Furthermore, no acts passed by the Council should be reversed and no change in executive positions should take place without the resident's consent.[76]

The government of India was unable to accede to the Maharaja's request.[77] The secretary of state concurred with this position. Not that he disapproved of Barr's plan in principle, as it would have probably had the desirable effect of increasing the resident's authority,

> But a second change in the form of the administration of the State within so short a time appears to be in itself undesirable; and, if the desired object could be attained without immediately abolishing the Council of State, it might, on the whole, be better to give the policy of 1892 a somewhat longer trial, and the new Resident an opportunity of judging for himself whether the present arrangements cannot be made to work more smoothly...[78]

The deposition of the Maharaja of Kashmir attracted attention from all over the English-speaking world. Pamphlets, articles, and books[79] all deplored the act. Most of them blamed the Maharaja's demise on the plotting of his relatives and close advisors with the government of India as represented by the resident. Partab Singh was removed, it was contended, without undertaking due process. The Indian press did not take long to join the hunt. The Bengali weekly, *Dacca Prakash*, commented:

> ... The dethronement of the Maharajah will alarm all the native princes, and they may thus be driven to combine in self-defence. The English

Government relies in such cases upon the weakness of the Indians. But it should bear in mind that even in this country of the gentle Hindus, a Raj Singh and a Sivaji made their appearance to contest with the Moghul Emperors when the Moghuls' oppression became unbearable. But supposing there is nothing to fear form the meek Indians. Is it right that the strong should oppress the weak? Are there not nations against whom the British are completely powerless? Will not the English nation disappear from the face of the earth if the natives deal with them on the principle of 'might is right'? The writer earnestly entreats the English Government not to do injustice to the Maharaja of Cashmere…[80]

On 31 May, the newspaper *Praja Bandhu* commented:

> It seems that the Resident is now become the real ruler of Cashmere. So the English have virtually, if nor formally, annexed Cashmere; and this virtual annexation has struck terror into the hearts of the people of that State. Heaven alone can say what all this will culminate in![81]

On 30 August, the same newspaper wrote:

> So the fate of the Maharaja is sealed. 'The Viceroy has the iron hand and the velvet glove' says a sycophant paper, but it forgets that there is nothing so abominable and revolting as when the iron hand is expected to crush one weak and helpless and lying prostrate before superior power. The British Government in its blind greed for lucre heeds not the loud cry for justice, which has been raised all over India. But history will reveal and hand down to future generations this gross abuse of power; this cowardice of triumphing over the fallen and trampling under foot of all just and fair dealing…

It was Calcutta's *Amrit Bazaar Patrika*, the prestigious English language daily, which most embarrassed the government. It somehow obtained a rather accurate version of a secret memorandum written by the foreign secretary, Sir Mortimer Durand, the original of which had stated:

> I do not agree with Mr. Plowden in this matter. He is too much inclined to set Cashmere aside in all ways and to assure that if we want a thing done, we must do it ourselves.
>
> The more I think of this scheme, the more clear it seems to me that we should limit our overt interference as far as possible to the organisation of military force in Gilgit…[82]

The revelation involved *Patrika* in a possible violation of the Official Secrets Act, but as far as the government was concerned, the damage was done. 'The Native Press has been abusing me in unmeasured terms for the disrespect with which it is alleged that the Maharaja has been treated,' Lansdowne wrote to Cross,

> and the public is, of course, told that we are aiming at the annexation of the State. Sir Lepel Griffin's suggestion that we should colonize Kashmir with British settlers has come somewhat inopportunely at this moment...[83]

In Parliament, the attack, in several debates, was led by the irrepressible Charles Bradlaugh. On 3 July, he berated the government for not according to Partab Singh the privilege of a judicial inquiry. 'The Empress Queen,' he concluded, 'the paramount Power, as judge, has condemned this man unheard. No man should be under menace of this injustice.'[84]

Cross was, however, undisturbed, and continued to back Lansdowne to the utmost. 'I hope you will not trouble yourself about any outcry that may be raised about Kashmir,' he wrote to the Viceroy.

> You may feel assured of my support. The actions of these champions of mis-rule is wonderful and contemptible[85]... There can be no doubt as to your action in Cashmere. It is only the mischievous class of people who persist in attaching false motives...[86] The State of Kashmir was so utterly bad that British influence alone could put things straight...[87] I am entirely satisfied with your dealings with the Maharajah of Kashmir.[88]

The publication of the *Kashmir Blue Book* (c. 6072) in 1890 brought cries of outrage based on the supposed exclusion of documents and parts thereof, which were potentially embarrassing to the government. Moreover, these charges were true. Lansdowne wrote to Cross before the appearance of the Blue Book

> I have been looking them [the Kashmir Papers] over with the object of determining whether it is possible to prepare an unexpurgated edition for the House of Commons. I think we might leave out one or two documents, which involved the reputation of other persons than the Maharajah. There is, for instance, no object in allowing it to be known that his brothers were at different times in the habit of supplying the Resident with secret information about the affairs of the State, or in publishing to the world the Resident's private opinion of the character of the two Rajahs.

On the other hand, Lansdowne did not see how those papers, dealing with the charges against the Maharaja, could possibly be excluded. 'One result of publishing them will be to render the restoration of the Maharajah virtually impossible. After such a revelation, public opinion would scarcely allow us to restore him, even if we believed that this course was for the public interest …'[89]

It was not until 1905 that the Maharaja was restored to his throne. His actions, however, were still subject to the resident's veto. Moreover, it was to take a further fifteen years for him to regain some semblance of his old powers. In retrospect, it is clear that Kashmir lost the independence the founder of the state, Gulab Singh, had so jealously guarded, on the day the Russian Cavalry first traversed the passes of the Hindu Kush and Pamirs.

NOTES

1. IOL, Secret 103, 15 July 1881.
2. IOL, Northbrook Papers, E.M. Prinsep to Northbrook, 2 July 1879.
3. IOL, Lytton Papers, Lytton to Cranbrook, 25 February 1880.
4. IOL, Northbrook Papers to M. Prinsep to Northbrook, 2 July 1879.
5. IOL, Lytton Papers, Cranbrook to Lytton, 5 October 1879.
6. C. 6072 (1890), Papers Relating to Kashmir, Viceroy of Secretary of State, 7 April 1884.
7. IOL, Northbrook Papers, Argyll to Northbrook, 28 November 1873. See Chapter 2, pp. 90-91.
8. C. 6072 (1892) Papers Relating to Kashmir, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 7 April 1884.
9. NAI, Section F, Procs., October 1884, 175-186. K. W., W. L.-W, (Lee-Warner), 22 January 1885.
10. C. 6072 (1890), Secretary of State to Viceroy, 23 May 1885.
11. Ibid., Viceroy to Maharaja, 14 September 1885.
12. Ibid., Maharaja to Viceroy, 18 September 1885.
13. Ibid., Resident to Foreign Secretary, 27 September 1885.
14. Ibid.
15. NAI, Foreign Department, December 1885, procs. 192-245. Proc. 243, H.M. Durand (Foreign Secretary of the Government of India) to Resident in Kashmir, 19 October 1885.
16. Ibid.
17. Some Englishmen still wanted to establish a European settlement in Kashmir. A Lieutenant Colonel R.N. Innes urged such a course on Lord Randolph Churchill when he was at the India Office. 'The benefits of a European colony in Cashmere,' he wrote, 'were originally intended to be conferred on the deserving British soldiers of the local Army, but notwithstanding that the local European Army has been

abolished, I still think that the scheme of forming a colony of Europeans in Cashmere would—whether the local European Army be reformed or otherwise—be in every way an advantage to the State.' IOL, Demi-Official Correspondence, Lt. Col. R.N. Innes, Retired, late 1st, Eur. Bengal Fusiliers to the Right Honorable Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary of State for India, 21 September 1883.

18. '... Having swallowed up half a continent,' Dufferin wrote Cross (Sec. Of State for India), 'the insatiable chaps (the Russians) have persuaded themselves that it is a real grievance if they are not allowed to confiscate a few hundred square miles of another gentleman's property...' IOL, Cross Papers, Dufferin to Cross, 27 May 1887. Dufferin had probably been influenced by St. John, who in February 1885 had written: '...we have left Gilgit and Chitral alone long enough ... It is time that an English representative should again show himself in those parts to prove to the Chiefs by his visit that we are taking an active interest in them, and do not intend them, willingly or unwillingly, to fall into the hands of Russia.' NAI, Foreign Department, Section F, April 1886, Procs. 175-186. Proc. 184, St. John to W. Lee-Warner, demi-official, 3 February 1885.
19. IOL, Secretary's Letter to Pol-Sec. Dept., India Office, 15 August 1885, Enclosure 1043F Conf., W. J. Cunningham to Colonel W.S.A. Lockhart, 6 June 1885.
20. The Lockhart and Woodthorpe confidential report of their Gilgit mission has disappeared from the India Office Library, and is not to be found in Delhi. Fortunately, Alder saw it before it vanished from London and refers to it in Alder, op. cit., 155.
21. NAI, Foreign Dept., Sec. F, August 1885, Procs. 12-81, Keep-withs.
22. Ibid., December 1885, Procs. 63-184, Proc. 90, Lockhart to H.M. Durand, Gilgit, 1 August 1885, demi-official. Lockhart said of Gilgit: 'A fine place for a British brigade of observation it would be, and with that in occupation the ruined villages would spring up again and the untilled fields would again bring forth.'
23. Alder, op. cit., 148.
24. Memorandum Regarding Affairs beyond the north-west frontier of India, June 1887, Alder, op. cit., 148.
25. IOL, Sec./Front. 65, 26 April, Trans NWF Journal, March 1886, IOL, Sec./Front. 110, 30 June 1888.
26. Alder, op. cit., 155.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid., pp. 155-157.
29. IOL, Sec./Front, 1-c, 18 November 1886, Memo Regarding Affairs beyond the north-west frontier of India, rec. October 1886.
30. IOL, 432 F., 6 March 1888, Peshawar Conf. Diary, No. 4, 22 February 1888.
31. IOL, Sec./Front, 56, 10 April 1888. It was again decided that the road between Chaprot and Gilgit should be improved. The Afghan frontier demarcation of 1887 and a programme of road building in the Punjab manifested British concern with the northern and north-western frontiers.
32. IOL, Sec./Front. 30 June 1888. Alder, op. cit., 162.
33. Ibid.
34. IOL, 2796F, 31 December 1888, Peshawar Conf. Diary, 22 December 1888, Chitral and Russia.
35. NAI, Secs. Procs., October 1887, pp. 286-291, memo on the present position in Central Asia, H.M.D. (Durand), 21 May 1887.

36. Algernon Durand, *The Making of a Frontier* (London, 1900), pp. 60-61.
37. Ibid., p. 115.
38. Ibid.
39. IOL, Sec./Front, 15 October 1888, Enclosure 7, Resident to Foreign Secretary, 12 September 1888.
40. Ibid., Enclosure 13, Walsham to Tsungli Yamen, 21 June 1888.
41. NAI, Ext. A. Procs., March 1886, pp. 90-93, Maharaja to Viceroy, 3 March 1886.
42. Ibid., St. John to H.M. Durand, 20 March 1886.
43. NAI, Sec. E, Procs., April 1887, pp. 510-512, K.W. 2, Diwand Gobind Sahai to H.M. Durand, 6 March 1887.
44. Ibid., July 1886, pp. 423-428, memo of interview between the viceroy and the Maharaja, 14 January 1886. The Maharaja also protested the abolition of the post of Kashmir vakil at the viceroy's headquarters in Calcutta and a recent proclamation permitting British traders to purchase land in Kashmir.
45. Ibid., Viceroy to Maharaja, 16 March 1887.
46. IOL, Dufferin Papers, Dufferin to Queen Victoria, 29 May 1888.
47. J.C. Bose, *Cashmere and its Prince* (Calcutta, 1889), pp. 9-10.
48. C. 6072 (1890), Report on the Affairs of the State to Jummoo and Kashmir by the Resident in Kashmir, 5 March 1888.
49. Ibid., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 18 August 1888.
50. Ibid., Government of India to Resident, 25 July 1888.
51. Ibid., Secretary of State to Viceroy, 12 October 1888.
52. IOL, Cross Papers, v. 26, Lansdowne to Cross, 20 March 1889.
53. Ibid., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 3 April 1889.
54. IOL, Indian State Papers (Kashmir), Nisbet to Durand, 16 March 1889. (This letter was not included in the Kashmir Blue Book, C. 6072).
55. Ibid.
56. C. 6072, Plowden to Durand, 27 February 1889.
57. NAI, Sec. E Procs., April 1889, pp. 80-98, K.W. by H.M. Durand, 16 March 1889.
58. Ibid., Lansdowne, 19 March 1889.
59. Ibid., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 3 April 1889.
60. IOL, Lansdowne Papers, Lansdowne to Roberts, 30 March 1889.
61. C. 6072, Amar Singh to Nisbet, 8 March 1889.
62. Vide, Footnote 57.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., K.W. 3, Durand to Nisbet, 1 April 1889.
65. NAI, Section E Procs., May 1889, pp. 553-567, Demi-Off., Nisbet to Durand, 30 April 1889. Sec. E. Procs., September 1889, pp. 204-208, Durand to Nisbet, 29 July 1889.
66. C. 6072, Maharaja to Viceroy, 14 May 1889.
67. Ibid., Viceroy to Maharaja, 28 June 1889.
68. IOL, Sec./Ext. 144, 2 December 1891.
69. Ibid., Enclosure Ladakh Diary, 23 June 1889.
70. IOL, Sec./Ext. 194, 2 December 1891.
71. IOL, Lansdowne Papers, Nisbet to Lansdowne, 15 July 1890.
72. Ibid., Ardagh to Nisbet, 31 July 1890.
73. Ibid., Nisbet to Ardagh, 1 June 1891.
74. IOL, Indian State Papers (Kashmir), Exterior 205, 9 December 1891.

75. IOL, Lansdowne Papers, Lansdowne to Cross, 8 November 1891.
76. IOL, Indian State Papers (Kashmir), No. 4470, Barr to Cunningham, 18 September 1894.
77. Ibid., No. 6, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 9 January 1895.
78. IOL, Elgin Papers, No. 33, Fowler to Elgin, 23 November 1894.
79. For example, J.C. Bose, *Cashmere and Its Prince* (Calcutta, 1889); William Digby, *Condemned Unheard* (London, 1890); and A.P. Nicholson, *Scraps of Papers* (London, 1930), pp. 87-113.
80. IOL, Reports of the Native Press, Bengal, March 1889.
81. Ibid., May 1889.
82. IOL, Cross Papers, Lansdowne to Cross, 14 October 1889.
83. Ibid., Lansdowne to Cross, 19 July 1889.
84. *Hansard*, 3 July 1889.
85. Ibid.
86. IOL, Cross Papers, Cross to Lansdowne, 3 October 1889.
87. Ibid., Cross to Lansdowne, 2 December 1889.
88. Ibid., Cross to Lansdowne, 28 August 1890.
89. Ibid., Lansdowne to Cross, 25 February 1890.

4

THE CONQUEST OF HUNZA, NAGAR AND CHITRAL (1888–1892)

The destruction of Kashmir's autonomy signalled yet another change in the frontier administration. Once again, the concept of a frontier province as part of British India was mooted;[1] this time by Lord Lansdowne but the appropriate time had not yet come. However, the Gilgit Agency was re-established for, 'as the suzerain power [*vis-à-vis* Kashmir],' Algernon Durand wrote, 'the responsibilities [in the northern marches] became ours and it was recognized that the Hindu-Kush for these hundreds of miles must be our natural frontier.'[2]

The return of the British was necessary, Durand contended, to facilitate 'the watching and control of the country south of the Hindu Kush, and the organization of a force which would be able in time of trouble, to prevent any *coup de main* by a small body of troops acting across the passes.'[3]

In his report on the present military position in Gilgit, dated 5 December 1888, Durand rendered his recommendations for the Gilgit Agency in some detail. He proposed that the agency be staffed by four British officers—an officer in charge, two junior officers of artillery and infantry respectively, and a doctor. The compliment of troops should consist of 1200 regular infantry (Kashmir Imperial Service Corps Troops), 100 garrison artillery, a battery of screw guns, and 500 irregular troops.

The Garrison was to be under the command of the British political agent, and not of the Kashmiri governor of Gilgit. As a means of gaining information and at the same time ministering to the needs of the inhabitants of the area, Durand urged the establishment of dispensaries at Gilgit, Gakuch, and Chitral. He also recommended that the telegraph line be extended to Gilgit, and that the Srinagar-Gilgit road, as well as the roads from Gilgit to Chaprot and Chitral, be improved.

It was recommended that the Kashmir subsidy to the Mehtar of Chitral should be raised from Rs. 16,500 to Rs. 18,000 and that the British should add an annual grant of Rs. 12,000. To aid Aman-ul-Mulk in his role of defender of the frontier, the Mehtar should also be presented with a mountain battery and 1,000 Snider Rifles in return for which he must open the road through Dir to Peshawar, improve the internal communications of his state, and strengthen its defences.

Further, he suggested, an annual subsidy of Rs. 2,000 and 200 stand of arms should be awarded to the Raja of Punyal as a *quid pro quo* for 200 men kept ready for service. Hunza and Nagar should each, in return for providing rights of visitation, also receive Rs. 2,000 per year, but not the arms. Finally, Durand provided a plan for improving the defences of Gilgit itself. '... These states [on Kashmir's northern frontier,]' he reminded his superiors,

> are now practically Frontier States of the Empire, and ... as such we must deal with them, though at the same time we recognize the suzerainty of Kashmir by carrying on any negotiations with them to some extent through the Maharaja.[4]

Lansdowne, in writing to the India Office, urged the acceptance of Durand's proposals with certain exceptions. He reduced the British subsidy to the mehtar from Rs. 12,000 to Rs. 6,000, and expressed considerable doubt about the expediency of supplying Aman-ul-Mulk with artillery and breech-loading rifles.[5] (Eventually 500 rifles, but not artillery, were provided.)

On the whole, the Viceroy agreed with Durand's contentions. 'The advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan,' he wrote,

> and the great recent development of her military resources in Asia, have admittedly increased the necessity for strengthening our lines of defence, and among the points requiring special attention are the northern passes of the Hindu Kush, which afford a difficult but not impracticable route for a force large enough to cause much excitement, if nothing worse, in Kashmir and among the tribes of Bajour and perhaps at Jalalabad and on the Punjab frontier. We cannot afford to disregard this risk. Further we cannot afford to permit any foreign power to establish in time of peace its influence in the country...[6]

On 28 June, the India Office approved the re-activation of the Gilgit Agency. The secretary of state was particularly interested in the

opening of the Chitral-Peshawar road. As it turned out, however, the attitude of the tribes along the route, and especially that of Umra Khan in Jandol, served to delay the successful conclusion of this scheme for some years.

Although the Kashmir durbar had offered to pay all the expenses of the Gilgit Agency, Lord Cross ruled that the state should only be liable for road-building costs within its borders and some Rs. 23,000 a year for the British Medical Officer and his subordinates.[7]

In July 1889, Durand, who was already in Kashmir, proceeded to his new post in Gilgit as agent. He was accompanied by Dr George Robertson and Lieutenant Manners-Smith. At the same time, Captain Francis Younghusband of the King's Dragoon Guards, was deputed to explore the various passes leading to Hunza from the east and the north.[8]

The purpose of Younghusband's journey was two-fold. Firstly he was to impress the Mir of Hunza with the benefits of allegiance to the British, in view of the fact that the Mir had recently informed the resident in Kashmir that the Chinese ambassador in Kashgar proposed to visit Hunza.[9] The resident was ordered to cajole the Mir into discouraging the mission without 'seeming to attach any special importance to the matter.' Younghusband was to support the resident's efforts. Secondly, he was also to visit the Kirghiz, who in the neighbourhood of Shahidulla (beyond the Karakorams), lived on the trade route from India to Chinese Turkestan. They were the constant victims of Hunza raids, and Younghusband was to intercede on their behalf with the Mir.[10]

Durand arrived in Gilgit on 5 July 1889. He was ordered at once to proceed to Hunza and Nagar:

> … to counteract the Chinese and Russian attempts to establish an influence in those parts, to explain to the Chiefs the position of affairs, to acquaint them with the wishes of Government, and to offer them increased subsidies of Rs. 2000 each per annum conditional upon the cessation of raiding by the Kanjutis in Shimshal Valley and elsewhere, and the grant of free access to their countries by British officers whenever considered necessary.[11]

Durand left Gilgit for Hunza and Nagar on 14 August, and immediately upon his arrival encountered difficulties with Safdar Ali of Hunza, who had murdered his three brothers three years ago as well as his father and predecessor, Ghazan Khan. Durand described the Hunza chief as 'a delicate-looking young man of twenty-two, with shifty

Mongolian eyes, and a chestnut-coloured small peaked beard and mustache [imposed on a] face…delicate oval in shape, and weak in expression…'[12]

He was displeased at being proffered the same subsidy as his Nagar neighbour and demanded an additional Rs. 500. Durand was incensed by his attitude. He now judged Safdar Ali to be 'cowardly, shifty, with a ridiculous idea of his own importance.'[13] He avoided a serious confrontation by granting Safdar Ali's sons Rs. 500.

Durand then informed the Mir that the payment of the subsidy was dependent upon his preventing further Hunza raids on the Kirghiz and upon his having no further intercourse with the Russians or the Chinese. After some grumbling, Safdar Ali agreed to all of Durand's conditions, except the last. He contended that he could not totally end his relationship with the Chinese in virtue of his holding a *jagir* in Yarkand.

The British emissary, for his part, accepted the compromise.[14] He informed his superiors that both Hunza and Nagar 'have agreed to the conditions attached by the Government of India to their increased subsidies and unreservedly expressed themselves anxious to serve the British Government.'[15]

Meanwhile, Younghusband had arrived in Leh on 31 July. After making contact with the Kirghiz, he started for the no-man's land around Shahidulla and reached it on 21 August. The Kirghiz complained that the Chinese offered them no protection against the predators from Hunza, and proffered their allegiance to the British. Younghusband, promising to forward their request to Calcutta, gave the tribesmen some money to repair their fort, and left on 3 September, bearing orders not to return to India via Hunza (where he was to have met Durand) because of the Mir's hostile attitude.[16]

Younghusband's party of seventeen, amply provisioned with over three tons of grain for the horses, half that weight in flour and rice for the men, and a small flock of sheep and goats, marched from Shahidulla in high spirits, determined to explore two unknown passes—first the Saltoro leading from Chinese Turkestan into Baltistan, and second the Shimshal which connected Turkestan and Hunza. Nearby was the world's second highest peak and the legendary Gasherbrum.

Younghusband advanced, but the assault on the Saltoro failed, proving that it was impassable, at least to an invading army. The Shimshal was successfully negotiated. On the Hunza side, Younghusband received an invitation from Safdar Ali, whose attitude

toward the British had softened, during the latter phases of Durand's visit (at least for the time being). Younghusband responded with presents and marched back through the pass. He announced it was his intention to take advantage of the Mir's invitation a few days hence. This young officer was not without his share of difficulties. The terrain he traversed was frequently close to impossible, and the natives of the region were often far from friendly, but he maintained his equanimity and a sublime self-confidence so typical of the late Victorian.

> … That I was able to do what I did was *mainly* due to the fact that I was an Englishman, that I stood for the British Empire, and I had at my disposal not only the authority but the good name which England during long centuries had established …
>
> I was the representative of England. I was…the embodiment, the incarnation of the spirit which animates England… And I could feel England expecting me to bear myself in a manner worthy of her…[17]

Once back on the north of the pass, Younghusband found his mail from India, which included a letter informing him that Captain Gromchevsky, the officer who had visited Hunza the previous year, was approaching India through the Pamirs. A few days later, he encountered 'a tall, fine-looking bearded man in a Russian uniform.'[18]

Gromchevsky and Younghusband immediately seemed to like each other and spent several enjoyable hours together. 'I thoroughly enjoyed that meeting with the Russian officer,' Younghusband later remarked.

> We and the Russians are rivals, but I am sure that individual Russian and English officers like each other a great deal better than they do the individuals of Nations with which they are not in rivalry. We are both playing a big game and we should not be one jot better off for trying to conceal the fact.[19]

After leaving Gromchevsky, Younghusband crossed the Kurbu Pass on the Taghdumbash Pamir, explored the Khunjerab Pass, and once more entered Hunza through the Mintaka Pass. As the British party approached, it lingered briefly so that an appropriately impressive entrance could be made. Younghusband changed into his scarlet dress uniform and approached Safdar Ali's tent, escorted by his six Gurkha escorts, clad in their best rifle green. Thirteen guns were fired in salute by the waiting men of Hunza, while hundreds of people covered the

hillsides and crowded about the line of march. At the entrance to the tent, Younghusband was met by Safdar Ali. He subsequently remarked:

> ... I was astonished to find myself in the presence of a man with a complexion of almost European fairness, and with reddish hair. His features, too, were of an entirely European cast, and dressed in European clothes, he might anywhere have been taken for a Greek or Italian. He was now dressed in a magnificent brocade robe and a handsome turban presented by Colonel Lockhart. He had a sword and revolver fastened round his waist and one man with a drawn sword and another with a repeating rifle stood behind him.[20]

Like Durand, Younghusband found Safdar Ali arrogant and overbearing. He was under the impression that the empress of India, the czar of Russia, and the emperor of China were chiefs of neighboring tribes. He claimed descent from a nymph of the Hindu Kush and felt that he and Alexander the Great were patterns cut from the same bolt.[21]

He incessantly asked for more presents. Younghusband recalled being constantly warned to bear in mind Gromchevsky's advice not to cater to Safdar Ali's greed. When Younghusband chided the Mir for having received Gromchevsky so cordially, Safdar Ali promised not to let the Russians into Hunza again. He would not, however, despite Durand's assertion that he had already done so, commit himself to stop raids on the Leh-Yarkand road unless his subsidy was increased.[22] All in all, Younghusband concluded that Safdar Ali 'was a cur at heart, and in the last degree, unworthy of ruling so fine a race as the people of Hunza'.[23]

Younghusband did not think that Safdar Ali would be quietened until he achieved the status of the Mehtar of Chitral, or was cowed by a superior force.[24] Nevertheless, the visit ended relatively amicably, and when Younghusband left Hunza on 23 November, Safdar Ali deputed his brother, Mahomad Nazim, to escort his British guest to Gilgit.

The reports filed by Durand and Younghusband had a profound effect on Lord Lansdowne. He was gratified that between the Karakoram and the Shimshal Pass, 'no practicable military route debouches into the Indus Valley from the North'.[25] On the other hand, the existence of the Mintaka Pass, on the direct road from Yarkand to

Hunza, was a cause for alarm. It had been virtually unknown prior to Younghusband's journey.

The Viceroy was convinced that the Pamirs presented no obstacle to a lightly equipped force. He seriously contemplated the invasion of Hunza and the disposal of the suspect, Safdar Ali:

> ... The successful invasion of Hunza and the destruction of the Raja's fort would at one blow dissipate these views [the local dread of Hunza]; raiding on the Yarkand Road would cease forever; and the Raja would sink to his proper position—that of an insignificant tributary of the British Government. Our practical assumption of sovereignty up to the Hindu Kush, and our determination to make the trade route from Leh to Yarkand safe, will leave us no alternative but force, should Safdar Ali Khan, as is most likely, not act up to his word. Such an expedition moreover would be an excellent object lesson, and show the surrounding tribes, who look on the British Government as an inexhaustible source from which to draw money, that there are bayonets behind the rupees...[26]

It was to take some two years before the Viceroy could discover some pretext to justify his purpose. Meanwhile, Lansdowne intended once more to send Younghusband to the northern frontier,

> with a view to the thorough exploration of the main range of the Mustagh Mountains from the Karakorum to the Kulik Passes, as well as the strip of almost uninhabited country which lies between the Karakorum and Kuenlun Mountains.[27]

What Lansdowne most feared was a Russian occupation of the gap between Afghanistan and China,

> since...this tract of country has twice been visited by Captain Gromchevsky (now a Deputy Commissioner in the Russian province of Ferghana), who then penetrated to Hunza and, we have reason to believe, negotiated with the Raja of that country.[28]

What was to be most hoped for was the extension of Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan until its borders were co-terminus with those of Kashmir and Afghanistan. George Macartney, a fluent Chinese linguist, and the son of Sir Halliday Macartney, Secretary to the Chinese legation in London, was to accompany Younghusband part-way, in order to re-establish British presence in Kashgar.[29]

'Russian exploring parties now parade over the whole of the Pamirs, Chinese Turkistan and Northern Tibet,' Lansdowne wrote. 'And we have no means of watching their movements; while with a Russian Consul-General for several years established at Kashgar, English influence is gradually dying out…'.[30]

On 7 October, Lord Lansdowne informed the India office of what must have seemed like almost a foregone conclusion. In his eyes, the 'close-border' system was at an end. 'We believe,' he wrote to Cross, 'that Her Majesty's Government will agree … that recent years have rendered it necessary to abandon the policy of non-intervention…'.[31]

But not all the officials in the India Office nor the Punjab government agreed with the Viceroy's views. Sir Alfred Lyall, formerly head of the government of India's foreign department, was not clear that the policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the frontier tribes had to be abandoned, and/or that any invading force should be met beyond the frontiers of India. He thought a reversion to the forward policy would do little good and would only arouse the amir of Afghanistan.[32]

The Punjab government was similarly inclined, but the secretary of state, aware of the basic prerogatives of the 'man on the spot,' acquiesced to Lansdowne's reformulation of the forward policy, albeit reluctantly. 'In according, therefore, my assent,' he wrote,

> to the course which your Excellency intends to pursue in extending your relations with the Pathan tribes,[33] for the tranquillity and better protection of the Indian frontier, I do so in full confidence that these measures will be taken with judgement, circumspection, and a careful regard to the large and ulterior questions from which they are inseparable.[34]

The year 1891 was to be a year of crisis on the Pamirs. Rumours of Russian activity were rife and Safdar Ali and his ambitious neighbour, Uzr Khan, the son of the Raja of Nagar, Jafar Khan, were apparently once more planning to move against the lands bordering Kashmir proper. Durand was more than active in attempting to counteract any and all threats to his position and that of the British Raj, along the northern frontier. He cajoled the tribes and constantly attempted to improve the roads between Gilgit and the outlying forts of Chalt, Chaprot and Nomal. The new agent's role was not an easy one, although perhaps less arduous than in the days of Durand's predecessor, John Biddulph. The Gilgit Agency was still in large part under the jurisdiction of the Kashmir authorities. Yet, Durand 'was really

answerable for the proper government and progress of the Gilgit district and the discipline of the troops.'[35]

Eventually a *modus vivendi* was achieved. Durand organized, unofficially, what he called a Committee of Public Safety, consisting of the Kashmiri governor, the Dogra military commander, and himself. This Committee met periodically to determine policy, and on the whole, the agent's advice was followed.[36]

In May 1891, it became known that the repair of the Gilgit-Nomal Road by Kashmiri sappers and miners was arousing strong feelings in both Hunza and Nagar. Uzr Khan had essentially replaced his pacifically inclined father and had murdered two of his younger brothers, thus aligning his state in common cause with his bellicose neighbour. Durand reported that both chiefs had declared it their intention to resist any attempts to repair the road past Nomal.

'In anticipation of the advance from Gilgit [towards Hunza] rocks are being piled on the edge of cliffs along which the Hunza road runs, and the Raja's attitude is defiant and improper.'[37] To further exacerbate the situation, Durand informed his superiors that Safdar Ali was maintaining his relations not only with the Chinese, but also with the Russian consul at Kashgar.[38]

> There was not much time to think (Durand later wrote), and I decided at once to make a dash … I gave the order at three in the afternoon, and by dusk two hundred men of the Kashmir Body Guard regiment, little Gurkhas and Dogras, were over the rope bridges and on their way, with their full complement of ammunition and rations.[39]

Durand not only strengthened the position at Nomal, but marched to Chalt, even though the tribesmen looked upon it 'as on the strings of their wives' pajamas.'[40] Conversations with the Hunza and Nagar *vakils* ensued, and an uneasy peace returned to the frontier. However, this encounter had given the tribesmen of Hunza and Nagar the opportunity to carefully assess the strength of Durand's Kashmiri forces and the Punyal levies, Raja Akbar Khan's merry men, as Durand called them. Durand returned to Gilgit on 21 June, convinced that his thrust had for the moment averted an explosion.

> But I had no hope that the settlement was permanent, for I knew Uzr Khan's ambition to make himself master of Chalt, and the Hunza chief was busy breaking every one of the terms of his agreement with us….[41]

Meanwhile, Younghusband had explored the whole of the Pamir region during the months of September and October 1890. He spent the winter in Kashgar and added a destitute young officer to his entourage for the journey homeward. Lieutenant Davison of the Leinsters had, without permission, maps, a guide, or experience, unsuccessfully attempted to cross the Mustagh Pass. His men had deserted him and he had stumbled into Kashgar more dead than alive. Younghusband recognized a kindred soul in him, and the two officers set out for India on 22 July, leaving Macartney behind in a post he was to occupy for a better part of the rest of his public life. On the third day after their departure, the travellers entered the Gez defile and started their ascent of the Pamirs. Intelligence reached them that a large party of Russians had encroached upon the area with the intention of annexing the entire Pamir region to the Russian Empire.

'The Russians are making an aggression on the Pamir,' Younghusband wrote to W.J. Cunningham in the foreign department.

> A party of over a hundred pakka Russians besides followers, have come down the Alai, and disregarding the Chinese General Chang, who was stationed at the junction of the Akhaital River with the Aksu, have made what appears to be a regular invasion of the Pamirs. One party has gone to the Alichur Pamir, and the other has come down the Little Pamir.[42]

Younghusband thereupon dispatched Davison to the Alichur Pamir, while he himself proceeded to the Taghdumbash. On 10 August, Younghusband reached Bozai-Gumbaz and encountered a party of ten Cossacks guarding some stores and awaiting the return of their main body, which was out reconnoitring. He pitched his tent nearby and,

> three days later, as I looked out of my tent, I saw some twenty Cossacks with six officers riding by, and the Russian standard carried in front. I sent out a servant with my card and invitation to the officers to come in and have some refreshments. Some of them came in, and the chief officer was introduced to me as Colonel Yonoff. He wore on his breast a white enamel Maltese Cross, which I recognized as the Cross of St. George, the most coveted Russian decoration … He was a modest, quiet-mannered man, and talked little, but he was evidently respected by his officers…[43]

The Colonel informed Younghusband that he had been sent by the Governor General of Turkestan to annex the Pamirs:

He says that it will include Rangkul and the Valley of the Aksu River; that Tashkurghan will still belong to China; that it is not yet settled whether the Taghdumbash Pamir shall be annexed; that the frontier will run by the Wakhijrui Pass to the newly discovered Khorabort Pass (also known as the Baikara or Tashkupruk Pass); that it will cross the Panja River somewhere here below Bozai Gumbaz; and that the Great Pamir as far as Yol Mazar will be included in Russian territory.

3. The Russian Colonel then went on to say that the whole of Shighnan and Roshan would be claimed by Russia, and that according to the 1873 Agreement, the Northern boundary of Afghanistan would run *in a straight line* from Victoria Lake to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus. I remarked that, as far as I remembered, the boundary laid down in the agreement was to follow the course of the River Oxus; but the Colonel said that Russia claimed that the boundary ran in a straight line, thus cutting off the bend of the Oxus …[44]

Some three nights later, 'just as I was turning into bed,' Younghusband wrote:

I heard a clatter of horses' hoofs outside my tent and upon looking out, I saw a party of Cossacks with the Russian flag. I sent out to them, and the Colonel then sent a message that he wanted to see me at once on urgent business. I went out and asked him and his adjutant into my tent. He said he had something very disagreeable to do, and gradually let me know that while he was at Lake Victoria that morning, he received a post from the Governor-General, which was delayed a good deal of time along the way, ordering him to look out for and to escort me out of the Russian territory into Chinese territory…[45]

Yonoff was full of apologies.

He then drew up, in French, a form of agreement, in which it was said that, acting under the instruction of the Russian Government, he was to cause me to leave Russian territory, and that I agreed, under protest, to do this, and undertook to proceed to Chinese territory by the Wakhijrui Pass; and not to return by any of a number of passes, which he named, and which included every known pass across the watershed of the Pamirs from the vicinity of the Alai as far down as the Baroghil Pass.[46]

For about six weeks, Younghusband remained encamped in a desolate spot, situated to the north of the Kilik Pass, and over 15,000 feet in altitude. On 4 October, Lieutenant Davison, who had been captured by the Russians on the Alichur Pamir, rejoined Younghusband, and the

two adventurers contemplated the problem of returning to India. Now that Younghusband in his parole had promised not to traverse any of the known passes, there was no alternative but to seek a heretofore undiscovered passage. Luckily, about eight miles south of the Wakhijrui, a negotiable crossing was found. 'There are no signs of a path by it,' Younghusband noted, 'and, as far as I could learn, not even a Kirghiz had been by it before.'[47]

However, the problem was only half resolved. The travellers had reached the Pamir-i-Wakhan, and the main ridge of the Hindu Kush still had to be crossed. Once again fortune smiled on them and two days out of Bozai Gumbaz, they traversed a narrow cut in the mountains, which led them to the Indian side of the great watershed of Central Asia. On 13 October, Younghusband and Davison arrived in Gilgit and tarried there for a few days with Durand. They then proceeded on the final stage of their odyssey—into the vale of Kashmir and ultimately to the plains of India beyond.

If the expulsion of Younghusband and Davison from the Pamirs seemed to many Englishmen to be yet another and more extreme example of Russian bombast and territorial aggrandizement, Russian sources indicate that the act was prompted by the conviction that the British were, in conjunction with Afghans and Chinese, trying to undermine Russian interests. While deciding about Yonoff's expedition, the minister for foreign affairs had written to his counterpart in the War Office:

> We have no positive information to date about the talks between Younghusband and the Chinese authorities in Kashgar, but in view of the right to the Pamirs, secured to us by the Russo-British agreement of 1872-1873, it would seem to me desirable to implement the measure suggested by you, namely, to send a *sotnya* or two of Cossacks to ride round the Pamirs...[48]

What Yonoff and Younghusband had started had, of course, to be settled in the conference chambers of Calcutta, St. Petersburg, and London. Meanwhile, the government of India ponderously prepared for possible hostilities. Lieutenants Molony and Manners-Smith (with Lt. Stewart) were sent, respectively, to the frontier of Wakhan and the Ishkuman Valley. The aid of the Amir of Afghanistan was enlisted.[49]

Moreover, nor was that loyal ally, the mehtar of Chitral, to be ignored. In January 1891, he had asked the Governor General for an increase in subsidy sufficient to employ 2,000 men to guard the passes

into Chitral.[50] But both the resident in Kashmir, Colonel W.F. Prideaux, and Sir Mortimer Durand, opposed the scheme. They contended that the arming so many Chitralis would be a mistake and that Aman-ul-Mulk's subsidy was large enough.[51] Durand estimated the Mehtar's annual income at Rs. 37,500,[52] and pointed out that his subsidy had only recently been raised.[53]

Nevertheless, by October the course of events had convinced the government of India to once more augment its investment in Chitral. The foreign department informed the resident:

> …Affairs in the Chitral and Gilgit direction have undergone a considerable change. Russian armed parties have entered the Pamirs and explored the passes right up to the Hunza frontier, and the Hunza and Nagar chiefs have evinced a spirit of hostility which almost culminated in a conflict between their forces and those under the British Agent at Gilgit. The Government of India has had an opportunity to personally discuss the situation under these altered circumstances with Lieutenant-Colonel Durand, and it has been decide: 1) To raise the subsidy by Rs. 6,000 to Rs. 42,000 pa. 2) To give Afzul and Nizam-ul-Mulk an annual present of Rs. 1500 each. 3) To give Shah-i-Mulk Rs. 1000 pa. All contingent on good behaviour and acceptance of advice.

In addition, a telegraph line was to be installed during the next year to connect Chitral with the British territory. A British resident officer was to be stationed there, and Muslim non-commissioned officers of the Indian army were to be deputed to train Chitrali irregulars.[54]

Throughout this period, the attitude of Safdar Ali Khan of Hunza continued to rankle in many a British bosom. Durand, in Gilgit, was particularly anxious to come to grips with the Mir. He recalled his rude treatment at the hands of the Hunza chief, Safdar Ali's loud protestations of allegiance to China, and his stated determination, if attacked, to fight and await the arrival of Chinese assistance.[55]

Durand pointed out that he had been willing to allow Safdar Ali to send an annual deputation to Kashgar, but that the Mir had, in return, to refrain from raiding the Yarkand Road and other regions beyond the bounds of his state. Durand again contended that Safdar Ali had agreed to the stipulations but that he had then broken his word. He communicated with both the Russians and the Chinese. He was disrespectful to the Maharaja of Kashmir, and he kidnapped a number of Kashmiris. '… my idea,' he wrote:

is that we have no time to lose if Hunza is not to fall under Chinese and Russian influence, and that we should be prepared to settle once and for all with Nagar this Autumn.

... The effect on the frontier of our crushing Hunza would be very great... By the payment of subsidies alone we cannot obtain the hold we must have on this frontier...The time has come to make these people feel the iron hand up to now concealed under the velvet glove...[56]

Without a doubt, Durand was particularly affronted by a communication he received from Safdar Ali in the summer of 1891. 'The letter in which, without reason, you had written pompous words...was received,' the Mir noted. '...Please God, we have the strength to fight until the arrival of the kha kan of China. May it be known to you.'[57]

In a memorandum dated 4 September, Durand urged the subduing of Hunza and Nagar, 'at the least sign of opposition to our wishes.' He requested the stationing of 200 Gurkhas at Gilgit and the assignment of fourteen more officers to the Garrison. He recommended the addition of mobile artillery on transport mules to the Brigade of three regiments and a mule battery already under his command. He asked that Lieutenant J. Manners-Smith, his assistant in Gilgit, be deputed to spend the winter in Chitral, as well as requesting the immediate construction of a telegraph line from Srinagar to Gilgit.[58]

Ten days later, Durand expanded on his already stated views. The British, he contended, had to control the whole country up to the crest of the Hindu Kush. This policy had been followed in Chitral to the west and in Ladakh to the east. It would only be consistent to pursue the same course in Hunza. He also proposed that in October, troops be moved up to Chalt and that the rulers of Hunza and Nagar be informed that due to the Russian threat, British troops must have free access to their borders and territory in order to hold the frontier. At the first overt move by either Hunza or Nagar, British troops should occupy the states, depose Safdar Ali and replace him by his five or six year old son, who would be advised by the pro-British ex-wazir currently in exile in Chitral. Even if Nagar remained friendly, Uzr Khan should be removed. 'He is dangerous to the ruling chief, who would be glad to get rid of him.'[59]

A memorandum concerning the course of events beyond the north-west frontier for September 1891 stated:

> ... The Hunza Raja has written to the British Agent at Gilgit promising not to allow any Russians to enter his territory, but declining to allow messengers from the Gilgit Agency to go to Captain Younghusband with letters via Hunza. He is being told in reply that his refusal cannot be regarded as satisfactory, and that in the future, he will be expected to send through and help to the utmost of his ability, any messenger despatched by the officers of the Agency. The Chief permitted one messenger to go to Captain Younghusband, but told him that he would not be allowed to return through Hunza territory. This incident is an additional proof of the necessity for bringing the Hunza chief to order at the earliest opportunity.[60]

As a consequence of this intelligence and the reports of Safdar Ali's continuing intercourse with the Russians and Chinese,[61] Lord Lansdowne acceded to most of Durand's requests. He approved the dispatch of two hundred Gurkhas and ten officers (making a total of sixteen) to Gilgit.[62] In addition, the government of India was to permit the stationing of the Kashmir battery currently in Gilgit at any forward site selected by Durand. The equipment of the Kashmir Mountain Battery at Jammu was to be improved (the existing guns were to be replaced by seven pounders) in preparation for its future departure for Gilgit. Lieutenant Manners-Smith's deputation to Chitral was approved. Captain W.H.M. Stewart, assistant to the resident in Kashmir, was designated as his replacement in Gilgit. Finally, the government of India was willing to construct a telegraph line between Srinagar and Gilgit.[63]

Amidst all the furor caused by Younghusband's detection in the Pamirs, George Macartney stated his opinion that[64] the Russians held no designs on territory within what the British considered their sphere of influence. They were not anxious for war. On the contrary, he suspected the whole incident had been:

> staged—not with a view to a definite assertion of Russian jurisdiction over the Pamira, but in order to force a protest from us respecting the treatment which Captain Younghusband had been subjected to; thereby paving the way to pourparler on the Pamirs.[65]

The foreign office intimated a similar possibility,[66] and the Viceroy conceded that Macartney's conjecture might be true.[67] However, if this somewhat altered conviction presaged a mellowing of the British Indian attitude towards Russia, it was to be of little use to the mir of Hunza. In a note to Durand, Safdar Ali had reiterated not only his

determination to exclude all Russians, Afghans, and Chinese from his realm, but also his intention of allowing no Englishmen to cross Hunza on their way to Yarkand and Kashgar. 'I had with my own mouth begged of you,' he wrote,

> to kindly stop intercourse with Kashgar, Yarkand, and the Pamirs through my country. I said I would not let your men pass through my country towards the up-country. I also said all persons coming for the Chinese, Russians and Afghans with the object of going towards Gilgit will be sent back. You and we have entered into these promises.[68]

The movement of troops under Durand's command to Chalt at the end of October, with the announced intention of building roads to Hunza and Nagar, set light to the train which was to result in the long anticipated explosion. By mid-November, Durand was prepared to commence the road building programme. On 16 November, it was noticed that the men of Hunza were gathering at Mayun and those of Nagar at Nilt. Durand consequently prepared for war, and within ten days had under his command 188 men of the 5th Gurkha Regiment, 30 men of the 20th Punjab Infantry (the Gilgit Agency Bodyguard), three regiments of Kashmir Imperial Service troops, a few sappers and miners, 160 irregulars from Punyal, a Kashmir Mountain Battery, two guns of the Hazara Mountain Battery, and a gattling gun. Durand's total force thus amounted to some 2,000 men, but as Gilgit and posts along his line of communications had to be garrisoned, only about 1,000 men (and 2,000 coolies) were available for operations beyond Chalt.

On 29 November, Durand sent ultimatums to both Jafar Khan of Nagar and Safdar Ali Khan of Hunza. The notes were pre-emptory in the extreme. The chiefs were informed that the Russian threat in the Pamirs necessitated the British gaining free access to Hunza and Nagar, although there was no intention of interfering in internal affairs.

> ... The Supreme Government has, therefore, decided to make a road from Gilgit to Chalt where a fort will be built, and from Chalt to Hunza/Nagar, or so far beyond that place as may be necessary. As a feudatory of the British Government, you are now called upon to give any aid in your power towards the construction of the road. I am further directed to inform you that, insofar as it concerns the road beyond Chalt, which will pass through your territory, no refusal on your part to permit its construction will be accepted. The road must be made. Unless you instantly comply

> with the demands of the Supreme Government, troops will enter your territory, and the road will be constructed in spite of any opposition you may offer. Three days from this date will be allowed you, during which your answer is awaited, and I warn you that, should it not be completely satisfactory, the troops under my command will move forward, and carry out the order of the Government…[69]

The second day, Durand's emissary returned without his horse, bearing letters from the two chiefs. Jafar Khan's message spoke of the friendship he and Safdar Ali had always manifested towards the British.

> I and my nephew [Safdar Ali] were not small persons, and now you have counted me and my nephew as smaller than others, and you have wasted our friendship and well-wishing feelings. Its punishment will be awarded by the Holy Preserver (God). There can be no taste in further words.[70]

Safdar Ali insisted, as indeed he had many times before, that his agreement with the Government of India stipulated only that he would bar his territory to the Chinese and the Russians, but not that he would allow the British to cross it, and certainly not to build a road. He wrote:

> …At this time you—devil having brought your army from Gilgit—have come to Chalt, and having written a letter full of threats you have forwarded [it] to these well-wishers. This should not have been done, because you are doing pretences about giving the road… From olden times this country has been subject to the Grand Khakan (Emperor of china)… From olden times having eaten the wealth of the Emperor of China, how can we not have bullets enough to last for a year? We hope we have golden bullets enough to last for a year. From us no sort of failing has happened towards the Court of the Government of India. From every side we will make our petition reach the English Government. At that time your head will go onto the gallows.[71]

The evening of 1 December found Durand and his men camped across the Hunza River. As he contemplated what lay ahead, Durand reflected:

> … I had done my best to preserve peace, and I failed. But as I lay under the stars, listening to the talk and laughter of the bivouac, and went over again and again in my mind the events of the last few months, I knew that I had left no stone unturned to avoid war. The tribesmen had rushed on their fate, the die was cast, and all that remained was to strike quick and to strike hard.[72]

2 December dawned clear and cold. Well before the first light, the bugles sounded reveille. Coffee was brewed and while it was still dark, the men fell into their positions and the march towards the enemy was underway. The path was precipitous, but two hundred Pathan engineers from the civilian firm of Spedding and Company did their best to make the route passable. By one o'clock, the enemy position at Nilt was reached; apparently only one ammunition mule was lost along the way.

The fortress must have presented a formidable picture. The walls, built of stone and reinforced by heavy timbers, were 15 to 20 feet high and 12 feet thick in most places. Large square towers stood at the corners. Access to the place was guarded by a rushing mountain torrent.

The 5th Gurkhas under Lieutenants G.H. Boisragon and Badcock, mounted a frontal assault, while the Punyalis and some men of the 20th Punjab rifles, led by captain Colin Mackenzie, Captain R.H. Twigg, and Lieutenant J. Manners-Smith, scrambled up the height that dominated the bastion. The Punyalis fired from the summit. The British officers and the 20th Punjabis descended into the trench where the fort actually stood, and opened an assault there.

From a bluff overlooking the river, and not 150 yards from the enemy, Captain Bradshaw and some of the Kashmiri sepoys commenced firing. They were soon joined by Captain C.A. Molony with some dozen soldiers of the 20th Punjab rifles and the gattling gun, and by Lieutenant R. St. G. Gorton, with two seven pounders. The tribesmen, not at their best fighting from fixed positions, were becoming demoralized despite the intrinsic strength of their defences. Although the artillery had little actual effect, it served to intensify the low morale.

Finally, a charge by one hundred men of the 5th Gurkhas, followed by the blowing up of the Nilt Fort's main gate by Captain Aylmer, carried the position and the day for the British. The action cost the defenders an estimated eighty dead, while the attackers lost six, with thirty wounded. Included in the last group were Lieutenants Badcock, Gorton, and Boisragon, Captain Aylmer, and Durand himself, who immediately designated Surgeon-Major George Robertson as political officer in his place and Captain L.J.E. Bradshaw of the 35th Bengal Infantry, military commander. As a result of the attack on Nilt, Captain Aylmer and Lieutenant Boisragon were awarded the Victoria Cross, and Lieutenant Badcock the Distinguished Service Order.

The problem of Nilt was easy compared to the prospect of capturing the forts of Thol and Mayun. Their supporting outworks, which straddled the Hunza River to the north of Nilt, had to be taken if the British forces were to advance into the heart of Hunza and Nagar. For a while, the British were nonplussed.

On 8 December an abortive attack on Thol had to be abandoned. The following day emissaries from Hunza offered to negotiate on the basis of a withdrawal of Durand's ultimatum, but the terms were declined. The British vented their frustration in a characteristic manner—by playing football. The men of Hunza and Nagar, presuming the game to be some strange and magical ritual, responded by beating drums and firing their *sher bachas*. Four days after the attempted attack on Thol, a surprise attack on Mayun went awry.

The dilemma confounding the British was not totally unlike that faced by Wolfe when confronted by the Heights of Abraham. A sheer cliff, at least 1200 feet tall, had to be scaled to dislodge the tribesmen from positions that were the key to the defence of the Thol Fort and neighbouring Ziarit. Through the courage of a Dogra named Nagdu, a difficult but negotiable path was discovered. On the morning of 20 December, Lieutenant Manners-Smith led fifty Gurkhas, followed by Lieutenant F.H. Taylor and fifty Dogras, on the difficult assent.

At one point the party took the wrong path and was faced with a precipice. Several times the soldiers had to retrace their steps. Their progress was steady—but slow, and fortunately for the British, they were not discovered until it was too late. A stiff fight still lay ahead, but one position after another fell until panic apparently seized the tribesmen on both sides of the river. Abandoning all thoughts of further resistance, they made a headlong dash for home.

For his part in the battle on the heights above Thol, Lieutenant Manners-Smith was awarded the Victoria Cross, making a total of three for the campaign.[73]

The war was essentially over. All that remained was to dictate the terms of peace.[74]

As the Nagar Raja, Jafar Khan, was considered to have been the pawn of his son, Uzr Khan, he was not deposed. Safdar Ali,[75] his wazir, Dadu, and Uzr Khan all fled the country. Uzr Khan in time returned and was exiled to Kashmir, but Safdar Ali and his wazir were deposed largely on the basis of some highly unrevealing and ambiguous correspondence with Russian and Chinese authorities found in the fort at Baltit, the capital of Hunza.[76]

Durand's friend the ex-wazir Humayun, was recalled from Chitral and installed in his old position, while Mahomed Nazim Khan, the half-brother of Safdar Ali Khan, who had earlier escorted Younghusband to Gilgit, was made the Mir. He ruled for many years and was never to forget to whom he owed his position.[77]

Lieutenant C.V.F. Townshend, of the Central India Horse, was appointed military governor of Hunza, and a strong contingent of troops was sent 'to Gulmat, Gircha and Misgar to examine the road, and impress remote villages by a military display.'[78] In August 1892, Younghusband was appointed political officer, and the occupation of Hunza was assigned to somewhat less than one hundred Kashmiri troops connected by small outposts with Gilgit, eighty-five miles away. By late 1894, the situation was apparently so stable that the political officer in Hunza was removed, leaving the commander of the garrison effectively in charge.

The tightening of the British (ostensibly the Kashmiri) grip on Hunza and Nagar brought into greater prominence the question of Hunza's relationship to China. George Macartney attempted to summarize the situation.

> 1st —The Chinese authorities receive tribute from the Raja of Hunza generally once a year in the month of September when the Raja sends up a deputation of three or four persons to Kashgar. His offering consists of two or three bags of small nuggets of gold, of the value of roughly Rs. 200, which are presented with a petition addressed to the Taotai of Kashgar. The petition is, I suppose, of a nature similar to that formerly sent by the Raja of Sikkim to the Chinese Resident in Tibet. In return for the offering, the Raja's envoys take back to Hunza presents in money amounting to Rs. 900 to Rs. 1,200 together with various pieces of silk.
>
> 2nd—The Chinese authorities consider that the Raja of Hunza being a vassal, they have the right to issue orders to him. In 1888, the then Taotai of Kashgar wrote the Raja. It was to order him to cease raiding at Shahidula. His letter, I believe, was little heeded, for it appears the Raja committed a raid soon after the receipt of it.[79]

According to a further dispatch from Macartney, written just before the commencement of hostilities, the taotai of Kashgar had assured Nazur Ali, the emissary from Hunza, that he would prevent an invasion by the British. He would depute an officer to the state who 'will be furnished with all necessary placards which, testifying to the fact that

Hunza is Chinese territory, will prevent foreigners coming into that State indiscriminately.'[80]

As soon as the Chinese became aware of the British incursions into Hunza, the taotai of Kashgar reminded the Viceroy and the commander-in-chief that Hunza was and had been, 'from olden times a dependency of the Chinese Empire.' Durand was prepared to allow a Chinese envoy to cross Hunza to talk with him at Gilgit, and he was willing to convey Chinese opinion to the Viceroy and the government of India, but he was under orders to treat Hunza as a rebellious feudatory of Kashmir and to admit no foreign rights on the Indian side of the Hindu Kush.[81]

Macartney reported that M. Petrovsky, the Russian consul in Kashgar, had tried to force the Chinese to intervene in Hunza, and had even threatened a Russian invasion of Sarikol should they not do so. The Viceroy consequently announced his intention to write to the taotai, explaining the British position and emphasizing that India had no designs on Chinese territory.[82]

Furthermore, the Viceroy justified the action in Hunza and Nagar by informing the India Office that the largely innocuous papers which had been found in the fort at Baltit had proved that the Russians had urged Safdar Ali to temporize until the spring, when Russian troops would come to his aid:

> ... These papers showed that Russian intrigues in Hunza were stopped none too soon by last Winter's campaign. Secret communications were in progress between the Russians and Safdar Ali Khan; a Hunza deputation had been sent to Russian Turkistan; presents had been sent to the Hunza Chief in the name of 'His Majesty the White Czar'; and M. Petrovsky had asked the Chief to give him a copy of his agreement with the British Government, and to intercept and send him letters from Captain Younghusband to the Gilgit Agency.[83]

Lansdowne also quoted a letter from Gromchevsky to Safdar Ali, in which the Russian explorer promised to visit Hunza as soon as 'some dear English guests' had left. The Viceroy did, however, admit that the conclusion of the message had pointed out that Gromchevsky had no political purpose to his journey. '... I have not received any Royal mandate,' the Russian had written, 'to any particular place.'[84] As a final strange coincidence, Lansdowne reported the discovery of a will of the late Ghazan Khan, in which he had designated the British nominee for the throne of Hunza, Mahomed Nazim Khan, his heir![85]

What the government of India clearly wanted was an Indian frontier established along the Hindu Kush and Chinese assumption of responsibility over at least some of the territory on the other side of the range. To alienate China over Hunza would thus clearly not be in the British interest. Macartney felt that the British should permit Hunza to continue paying tribute to China in return for a British consul at Kashgar, the right of merchants to travel via Sirikol, and the establishment of British trading privileges in Chinese Turkestan equivalent to those enjoyed by the Russians. Generally, he was sympathetic to the Chinese position. 'In six years,' he wrote, ' we have taken no less than three countries, Burma, Sikkim and Hunza, which they well deserved, it is true, to lose for their bad government, but to which they, nevertheless, had some sort of claim.'[86]

The Chinese, for their part, asked why Safdar Ali, who was the subject of the 'Great Emperor,' had been deposed. 'Colonel Durand should keep your troops within your own limits, and order the troops to go back. This will relieve the people of Kanjut from anxiety and give them peace of mind.'[87]

Safdar Ali himself wrote plaintively from Kashgar: '... I have committed no other fault than that of not giving passage for the road; because from olden times Kanjut had been subject to the Emperors of China; I could not give passage for the road... I do not deny that I have eaten the salt of the Government of India.' In conclusion, he begged for reinstatement,[88] but it was to no avail.

In due course, the Chinese recognized Nazim as the new Mir of Hunza, but asked to be represented at the official enthronement. '...the Chinese Government,' the foreign department of the government of India informed the resident in Kashmir,

> has requested with much earnestness, that the installation of the new ruler should take place in presence of one of its officials. The Chinese Ministers would look on the concession of this point as a tangible proof to the world that in this matter China and England are acting in complete accord. The objections to this proposal are evident, but Her Majesty's Government have agreed to it on the understanding that it will not form a precedent for such claim on future occasions...[89]

The Hunza tribute question was never really discussed, although it was tacitly agreed that the mir of Hunza could continue the custom if he so desired and if he attributed no political significance to the act.

At the end of May, the Chinese emissary, General Chang Hung Tao, arrived in Hunza. He apparently included among his gifts for the Mir a hat adorned with a button and a peacock feather, the acceptance of which might have implied a hierarchical relationship between the Nazim and the Chinese. 'The Envoy is friendly in demeanour,' the government of India commented,

> but disposed to assert the authority of the Chinese Government. The British Agent at Gilgit has been informed that it has been settled between the British and Chinese Government that Chinese claims are to be satisfied in full by the presence of a Chinese representative at Muhammed Nazim's installation; nothing beyond this can be allowed;...the presents should not be accepted...The Envoy...is not to have any direct dealings with the Hunza Chief.[90]

At the ceremony itself, Surgeon-Major Robertson, at that time officiating British agent in Gilgit, represented the British Indian government. The new ruler was presented with a *sanad* from the Maharaja of Kashmir, under the terms of which Kashmiri suzerainty over Hunza was clearly established. The Chinese envoy played his part with good grace; although the contention that China had given up all claims to Hunza was clearly an exaggeration. Even Whitehall, usually resentful of frontier wars and antagonistic towards new responsibilities, was at least resigned to the fact. 'I regret,' the new secretary of state for India, Lord Kimberley, wrote Lansdowne,

> the necessity of advancing so great a distance from our frontier in order to counteract Russian intrigues. I am reluctantly obliged to admit that we cannot safely leave such points as Chitral, Hunza and Nagar, and the Indus Valley tribes open to them....[91]

Conditions to the north of the Hindu Kush and the Pamirs might still have been in flux, but at least the British hegemony now stretched to the very base of the lofty mountain wall.

NOTES

1. See discussion concerning Lord Lytton's views regarding possible formation of a frontier province in Chapter 2.
2. A.G. Durand, op. cit., p. 2.
3. Ibid., p. 120.
4. IOL, Sec./ Front. 58, 6 May 1889, Enclosure, Report on the Present military Position in Gilgit by Captain A. Durand, 5 December 1888.

5. IOL, Sec./Front. 58, 6 May 1889.
6. C. 7864 (1895), Correspondence Relating to Chitral, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 6 May 1889.
7. Ibid., Secretary or State to Viceroy, 28 June 1889.
8. IOL, Sec./Front. 98, 5 July 1889, Enclosure Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the Northwest Frontier of India, Kashmir, Chitral, etc.
9. IOL, Sec./Front. 98, 5 July 1889.
10. Ibid.
11. IOL, Sec./Front. 105, 3 December 1889.
12. Durand, op. cit., p. 159.
13. Ibid., p. 163.
14. IOL, Sec./Front. 105, 3 December 1889, Enclosure 9, Foreign Secretary to Resident, 6 September 1889.
15. Ibid., Enclosure, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the Northwestern Frontier of India, November 1889.
16. Ibid.
17. George Seaver, *Francis Younghusband* (London, 1952), p. 123.
18. Ibid., p. 125.
19. F.E. Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent* (London, 1896), p. 272.
20. Ibid., p. 284.
21. Ibid., pp. 285-286.
22. IOL, Sec./Front 4, 7 January 1890, Enclosure, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the Northwestern Frontier of India, December 1889.
23. Seaver, op. cit. p. 132.
24. Vide, footnote 22.
25. IOL, Sec./Front. 43, 28 April 1890.
26. Ibid.
27. IOL, Sec./ Front. 87, 14 July 1890.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. IOL, Sec./ Front. 124, 7 October 1890.
32. IOL, Minute Paper, Sec. Dept., India Office, Sec. 90, 26 December 1890, to Government of India, Sec./ Front. 124, 7 October 1890.
33. The tribesmen of Chitral, Gilgit, Hunza, and Nagar, etc., were considered Dards rather than Pathans.
34. IOL, India Office Sec. 90, to Governor-General in Council, 26 December 1890.
35. Durand, op. cit., p. 226.
36. With the advent of Durand's successor, Dr. G.S. Robertson, the situation became more reminiscent of Biddulph's time. Robertson claimed that the Dogra Governor ruined his opponents through his power to commandeer forced labour, which he often did, when the rice crop was in need of harvest. Robertson suggested that the agent, at least for a time, be vested with the civil authority. IOL, Elgin Paps., 37, Elgin to Fowler, 22 October 1894.
37. IOL, Sec. / Front. 95, 9 June 1891, Enclosure Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond The Northwestern Frontier of India, May 1891.
38. Ibid.
39. Durand, op. cit., pp. 238-9.

40. Ibid., p. 239.
41. Ibid., p. 243.
42. IOL, Sec./Front. 158, 8 September 1891, Enclosure 3, Demi-Official, Younghusband to Cunningham, 5 August 1891.
43. Seaver, op. cit., 143.
44. IOL, Sec./Front. 158, 8 September 1891, Enclosure 15, Younghusband to Foreign Department, 13 August 1891.
45. Ibid., Enclosure 25, Younghusband to Cunningham, 18 August 1891.
46. Younghusband, op. cit., p. 331.
47. Ibid., p. 335.
48. Ann Sheehy, 'Russia and China in the Pamirs: 18th and 19th Centuries,' *Central Asian Review*, volume XVI, No. 1, 1968.
49. IOL, Sec./ Front. 165, 30 September 1891, Enclosure 14, H.M. Durand to Amir of Afghanistan, 18 September 1891.
50. IOL, Sec./ Front. 170, 14 October 1891, Enclosure 3, No. 151F. H.S. Barnes for Dept. to Prideaux, 6 February 1891.
51. Ibid., Enclosure 6, No. 1327, Prideaux to Durand, 9 May 1891, No. 406/88, Durand to Prideaux, 13 April 1891.
52. Ibid., Enclosure 7, No. 601/119, Durand to Prideaux, 27 May 1891.
53. Ibid., Enclosure 6, No. 406/88, Durand to Prideaux, 13 April 1891.
54. Ibid., Enclosure 8, W. J. Cunningham, Foreign Department to Prideaux, 1 October 1891.
55. Durand contended that Hunza had been subject to Kashmir since 1868 and Nagar since 1869. Hunza annually paid Kashmir a tribute of two horses, two hounds, and twenty ounces of gold in return for which the mir received a subsidy. The Nagar tribute consisted of twenty-one tolas of gold dust and a basket of apricots. At least part of the basis of Safdar Ali's subordination to China was a *jagir* he held in Yarkand. Sec./Front. 1-c, 25 October 1891, Enclosure 5, A.G. Durand to Prideaux, 22 July 1891.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid., Safdar Ali to A.G. Durand, 4 June 1891.
58. Ibid., Enclosure 6, Memorandum by A.G. Durand, 4 September 1891.
59. Ibid., Enclosure 8, Memorandum by A.G. Durand, 14 September 1891.
60. IOL, Sec./Front. 172, 14 October 1891.
61. The evidence of Hunza's duplicity was rather vague. A mission from Hunza was apparently in Kashgar at the same time as Younghusband, whom they ignored. The emissaries supposedly gave presents to Petrovsky and had a secret meeting with the Russian Governor-General at Osh.
62. IOL, Sec./Front. I-c, 25 October 1891.
63. Ibid., Enclosure 13, Resident to acting President of Kashmir State Council, 23 September 1891. Durand had great difficulty with the telegraph line from Gilgit to Srinagar, and it was not operating properly even by 1892. The line from India to Kashmir was often out of order for as long as eight months out of the year. Alder, op. cit., p. 231.
64. Macartney had been officer on special duty in Kashgar. He now became Special Assistant for Chinese Affairs to the resident in Kashmir.
65. IOL, Sec./Front. 212, 16 December 1891, Enclosure 1, G. Macartney to Foreign Department, 13 September 1891.

66. IOL, POl. and Sec., Home Correspondence, Foreign Office to India Office, Minute Paper, 21 October 1891.
67. IOL, Sec./Front. 212, 16 December 1891.
68. Ibid., I-c, 25 October 1891, Enclosure 9, Safdar Ali to Durand, no date (sometime in September).
69. IOL, Sec./Front. 51, 23 March 1892, Enclosure 3, Durand to Safdar Ali and Jafar Khan, 29 November 1891.
70. Ibid., enclosure 4, Jafar Khan to Durand, 30 November 1891.
71. Ibid., Safdar Ali to Durand, 1 December 1891.
72. Durand, op. cit., p. 252.
73. A number of Orders of Merit, which Durand judged the 'native army' equivalent of the Victoria Cross were awarded to the rank and file. The large number of Victoria Crosses awarded in the Hunza campaign leads to the conclusion that the brief war was arduous and that perhaps the medal became more difficult to earn as time went on.
74. NAI, Sec. F, Procs., September 1892, nos. 396-472.
75. Safdar Ali retired to his *jagir* in Yarkand.
76. Correspondence (though not complete) dealing with the Hunza-Nagar campaign was published in C. 6621 (1892).
77. *The Autobiography of Sir Mohamed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E., Mir of Hunza*, translated from the Urdu by his grandson, Jamal Khan. There is a copy of this unpublished work in the Library of the University of California, Berkeley.
78. IOL, Sec./ Front. 8, 13 January 1892, Enclosure, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the NW Frontier of India, December 1891. Also C. 6621, No. 17, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 31 December 1891.
79. IOL, Sec./Front. 34, 2 March 1892, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the NW Frontier of India, February 1892.
80. Ibid., Enclosure 2, Macartney to Foreign Department, 23 November 1891.
81. IOL, Sec./Front.34, 2 March 1892, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the NW Frontier of India, February 1892.
82. Ibid.
83. IOL, Sec./Front. 96, 31 May 1892. The India Office Library copy of secret and political memorandum No. 88 on the re-organization of the Gilgit Agency, prepared by S.C. Bayley, has attached to it a newspaper clipping which claims to be a translation of an excerpt from the official *Russian Turkestan Gazette* in which Baron Vrevsky, the Governor-General of Russian Turkestan, refuses the request of a Hunza delegation for arms, etc. Reuters then reports that the emissaries were well-treated and tentative plans for communications and commercial intercourse between Hunza and Russian Central Asia were concluded.
84. Ibid.
85. IOL, Sec./Front. 96, 31 May 1892.
86. Ibid., Enclosure 6, Macartney to H.M. Durand, 16 February 1892.
87. Ibid., Enclosure 2, Taotal of Kashgar to A.G. Durand, circa February 1892.
88. Ibid., Enclosure, Safdar Ali to A.G. Durand, no date.
89. IOL, Sec./Front. 96, 31 May 1892, Enclosure 17, Foreign Department to Resident, 16 May 1892.
90. IOL, Sec./Front. 120, 5 July 1892, Memorandum Regarding Affairs Beyond the NW Frontier of India, June 1892.
91. IOL, Lansdowne Papers, Kimberley to Lansdowne, 24 November 1892.

5

TURMOIL AND SETTLEMENT TO THE NORTH OF THE VALE (1892–1898)

The surge of British activity to the south of the Pamirs was largely the result of Russian expansion towards India, in general. However, the Russian capture of Younghusband and Davison without apparent provocation in territory that was not Russian in particular, engendered greater suspicion. The British Government demanded an apology but the Russian authorities demurred. In fact, it turned out that the two British officers were actually apprehended in Afghanistan so that both Britain and Russia ended up being embarrassed.

To break the apparent log jam, the British ambassador to Petersburg, Sir Robert Morier, suggested to his counterpart (H.K. de Giers) that the dispute could be settled if the Russian Government simply communicated to London that it disavowed the actions of Colonel Yonoff and that it was prepared to discuss the delimitation of the Pamir region which, 'with a little goodwill on both sides, there would be no difficulty in agreeing to.'[1]

As Morier informed Salisbury, delimitation or even the commencement of negotiations leading in that direction, would remove the danger of Russian incursions during the year. It would also not commit the British to any specific course of action if no suitable terms for delimitation could be determined.[2]

De Giers accepted both of Morier's suggestions in principle,[3] and Salisbury was soon able to report that G. de Staal, the Russian ambassador to the Court of St. James, had called on him at the Foreign Office to issue a verbal apology. Salisbury later remarked of the meeting that de Staal 'has a peculiarity of never finishing a sentence, which makes him an admirable channel for an awkward apology.'[4] But the British were not to be satisfied with a verbal apology; they insisted that the words 'regret' and 'illegal' would have to be included

in any written statement by the Russian government,[5] and based on this principle Morier composed a formula which de Giers approved:

> Colonel Jonow having been ordered to make a military promenade through perfectly wild and uninhabited country, expelled two British officers in the *bona fide* belief that the territory whence he expelled them was Russian. On our remonstrance, the Russian Government caused an inquiry to be instituted, the result of which was that they condemned the action of their officer as illegal, and declared their regret at it.[6]

In time, the Russian government apologized and after many months, the so-called 'Pamirs Agreement of 1895' successfully defined the border between Afghanistan, British India, Russia, China and Kashmir; not that any of the parties involved were totally happy or satisfied with this agreement. Nevertheless, the Pamirs Agreement defused an increasingly volatile confrontation and provided a lasting boundary settlement in a region that had previously only known confusion. It was a genuine compromise between Russia and Britain. As Alder puts it:

> Russia gave up all chance of direct contract with the passes and India, but gained instead a great deal of territory on the Pamirs. India gave up the chance of direct control north of the passes, but maintained the glacis free of Russian occupation…[7]

However, the prevalent state of mind in the council chambers in Calcutta and among the men on the frontier was too Russophobic for the negotiation of the Pamirs Agreement to materially assuage Indian fears of Russian intentions. Lord Lansdowne, in his last few months in office, had commenced the process of slowly decreasing the British dependence on their positions in Gilgit and Chitral, and Lord Elgin, when he assumed office in late 1893, continued his predecessor's policy direction by ordering the reduction of the Gilgit Agency's military establishment.[8] But most officers of the Indian army, as well as civil officials, considered these actions foolhardy and events were destined to indicate that perhaps they were right.

On 1 January 1895, Nizam-ul-Mulk was out hawking with his half-brother, Amir-ul-Mulk, at the wooded village of Broz, about twelve miles from the town of Chitral. Around midday, the mehtar rode up a small rise to watch his falcons. Suddenly his turban started to unwind, and as he raised his hands to rearrange it, Amir-ul-Mulk, who according

to Robertson was 'generally believed to be a semi-idiot'[9] attempted to shoot his brother in the back. His weapon, however, misfired; whereupon, he signalled an attendant who, without further ado, murdered the hapless nizam. Amir-ul-Mulk immediately proclaimed himself Mehtar and rode off to Chitral to assume power.

But he was promptly deposed by Dr Robertson, who placed Amir's younger brother, Shuja-ul-Mulk, on the throne. Sher Afzal, the murdered prince's uncle and Umra Khan of Jandol, both claimants to a position they now deemed vacant, joined forces to restore domestic control in Chitral. By 3 March 1895, all the British forces and their supporters were trapped within the confines of the Chitral fort and the siege had begun!

Chitral fort was about 80 yards square. Its walls were some 25 feet high and 8 feet thick. At each corner, a tower rose about 20 feet above the walls. Beyond the north face of the fort, there was a fifth tower to guard the way to the Chitral River, some 50 yards away. Adjacent to the east wall lay a garden, approximately 140 yards in length, and 40 yards from the south-east tower stood a summer house. Stables and outhouses of various sorts were clustered to the north and west. The walls were constructed of stone, unbonded by cement, but supported by a cradlework of wooden beams laid longitudinally and transversely. To guard against sniper fire from the huge chinar trees, which surrounded the fort and from top of which the interior of the bastion made an easy target, Robertson gathered doors, boards, saddles, boxes, sacks of earth, even curtains and carpets, and had them turned into bullet-proof shields for the men at the firing slots. Since there was no well in the fort, a covered path to the river was built.

Robertson had about 400 men with him in the fortress of Chitral. Of these, ninety-nine belonged to the 14th Sikhs and 301 to the Kashmir Imperial Service troops. The officer corps consisted of Robertson, Campbell (now badly wounded), Lieutenant Gurdon, Lieutenant H.K. Harley of the 14th Sikhs, Captain Townshend (as a result of Campbell's condition, the new military commandant), and Surgeon-Captain H.F. Whitchurch of the 24th Punjab Infantry. The walls also protected eleven camp followers, twenty-seven servants and assorted clerks, messengers, commissariat and transport personnel, as well as fifty-two Chitralis, for a total population of 543. If the whole garrison went on half-rations, there were enough comestibles for about two and a half months. The ammunition supply was adequate, if not comfortably large, including 300 rounds per gun of Martini-Henry ammunition for the

Sikhs, and 280 rounds per gun of Snider ammunition for the Kashmiris.[10]

4, 5 and 6 March were largely devoted to making the fort ready for what lay ahead, the besiegers not having pushed their advantage of the previous day. On 5 March, messages arrived from both Sher Afzal and Umra Khan. Their demands were identical: recognize Sher Afzal as Mehtar of Chitral. Robertson replied politely but resolutely in the negative. The first major assault took place on the night of 7 March, when several hundreds of Umra Khan's Pathans attempted to cut off the fort's water supply, but were repulsed.

The events of the evening of 7 March coincided with the initiation of some ill-considered actions near Mastuj, where defeats at Koragh and Reshun effectively forced the British troops in the vicinity into a defensive posture, confined within the walls of the fortress of Mastuj.[11] Also on 7 March, news of the happenings in Chitral reached Peshawar. But the military authorities were so confident Robertson could hold out, that for seven days they limited themselves to preliminary preparations and to the sending of a final warning to Umra Khan.

Back at Chitral, the situation was indeed threatening. On the nights of 13 and 14 March, the forces of Umra Khan and Sher Ali mounted attacks on the east wall of the fort to cover the construction of a *sangar* (a breastwork made up of fascines of green branches) on the river bank about 150 yards upstream from the fort. The following night they repeated the process, and as dawn broke another *sangar*, yet nearer to the fort, met the eyes of the besieged. The night of 15 March saw the construction of a third *sangar*, closer still to the walls. The obvious answer was a sally from the fort, but the garrison was not strong enough in numbers. Only the Sikhs could be really relied upon, and a further reduction in officer personnel might be fatal. The fact that the night attacks were not in themselves more successful was in part due to the construction of pine chip and kerosene-soaked 'fireballs.' Robertson had learned the formula for these from the men of Nagar during the expedition of 1891, and which when thrown from the parapets, illuminated the night sky for about half an hour.

As the days wore on, Sher Afzal and Umra Khan negotiated almost continuously with Robertson, and a truce remained in place from 15 to 21 March. What the besieged could not know was that their fate was now the concern of the entire British Empire. What Robertson later quite properly called 'a minor siege', had turned into a *cause célèbre* out of all proportion to its intrinsic importance. It stirred the British

imagination, which in the days of 'prestige Imperialism' was becoming ever more sensitive to romantic notions of national honour and destiny.

A universal sigh of relief greeted the news from Peshawar that the first Division of the First Army was being mobilized at its Nowshera Base, although the force was not to be encumbered with a heavy baggage train or tents—each officer was limited to forty pounds of baggage and every man to ten pounds. Twenty-eight thousand pack animals and their fodder had still to be gathered. The Division was to be commanded by General Sir Robert Low, and was to consist of three infantry brigades, each with four battalions, two regiments of calvary, four batteries of mountain artillery, and detachments of sappers and miners. An additional three battalions of infantry would protect the force's line of communication. Low's chief of staff was to be appropriately named Brigadier Bindon Blood, while the Brigade commanders were to be Kinloch, Waterfield and Gatacre.

To ease Low's path through Pathan country, between Peshawar and Chitral, the government of India decided to issue a proclamation. It is worth rendering in full, as it was to assume major significance in British domestic politics:

To all the People of Swat and the People of Bajaur, who do not side with Umra Khan:

Be it known to you, and any other persons concerned, that, Umra Khan, the Chief of Jandol, in spite of his often repeated assurances of friendship to the British Government, and regardless of frequent warnings to refrain from interfering with the affairs of Chitral, which is a protected State under the suzerainty of Kashmir, has forcibly entered the Chitral Valley and attacked the Chitrali people.

The Government of India has now given Umra Khan full warning that, unless he retires from Chitral by the 1st of April, corresponding with the 5th day of Shawal 1312 H, they will use force to compel him to do so. In order to carry out this purpose, they have arranged to assemble on the Peshawar border a force of sufficient strength to overcome all resistance, and to march this force through Umra Khan's territory towards Chitral.

The sole object of the Government of India is to put an end to the present and prevent any future, unlawful aggression on Chitral territory. As soon as this object has been attained, the force will be withdrawn.

The Government of India has no intention of permanently occupying any territory through which Umra Khan's misconduct may now force them to pass, or of interfering with the independence of the tribes; and they will scrupulously avoid any acts of hostility towards the tribesmen so long as they for their part refrain from attacking or impeding in anyway the march

> of the troops. Supplies and transport will be paid for, and all persons are at liberty to pursue their ordinary avocations in perfect security.[12]

The government of India had little doubt that Low's force would successfully attack Chitral, but they were somewhat concerned lest the difficult terrain and tribal opposition delayed him long enough to allow Robertson and his garrison to be over-run. Consequently, Colonel J.G. Kelly was ordered to advance from Gilgit across the 12,400 foot Shandur Pass. Kelly could only call upon the 400 men of the 32nd Pioneers, more accustomed to road construction than fighting, a two-gun section of the Kashmir mountain battery under Lieutenant C.G. Stewart, Captain H.B. Borradaile, Lieutenant William Benyon of the 3rd Gurkhas, and four subalterns—Bethune, Cobbe, Petersen, and Cooke. Nevertheless, on 22 March the little party started off in high spirits on what was a most difficult journey—especially in the dead of winter.

Neither of the relief forces were to have an easy time of it. Low had to fight his way across the difficult Malakand Pass, the Swat and Panjkor Rivers, and finally the snow-clogged Lowari Pass leading from Dir to the Chitral Valley. Kelly had to drag his troops across the Shandur, where the drifts reached the men's chests. Life was easier in Chitral. Other than some desultory firing from the *sangars* and surrounding cover, Robertson and his men devoted their time to strengthening the defences and fighting boredom. A high point came on 28 March. 'I had often lamented,' Robertson wrote,

> not having with me my British Agent's flag, which had been left behind at Gilgit. Possibly I was getting superstitious on the subject and imagined that its absence brought us ill-luck. It seemed almost improper, not to say illegal, to fight without the Union Jack floating over our heads. Also many people were getting downhearted…

A Sikh who was adept with a needle was soon discovered, and from a blue turban, a cheap red-dyed cloth, and some white material, a flag reminiscent of the Union Jack was created, based on a picture on the back of one of Whitchurch's empty navy-cut tobacco tins. The flag was raised with due ceremony.

> At early dawn and every morning after, when one capped to the fluttering rag, a smile of confidence, one might almost say a smile of adoration … accompanied the action….[13]

On 30 March, at morning muster, it was found that the fort still held 543 mouths to feed, 403 of these were soldiers and only 342 were riflemen actually on duty, the rest being in the hospital. Rations to last until 11 June were on hand, given the existing rate of consumption.[14]

The news of the crossing of the Malakand and the Shandur Passes, both of which were accomplished on the same day—3 April—must have convinced Sher Afzal that he had to drive his attack home. On 5 April, his forces occupied the summer house, only 40 yards form the south-east corner of the fort. Two days later, the tribesmen made a concerted attack on the covered path to the river but were turned back by the Sikhs. While this action was in progress, however, Sher Afzal's men were able to pile faggots and other combustibles at the bottom of one of the towers. When they set fire to them, the tower was soon enveloped in flames which were only extinguished with great difficulty. Again, with the exception of sporadic sniping, hostilities came to an essential halt. But Kelly and Low continued their inexorable advance. On 9 April, Kelly relieved the garrison at Mastuj, and on 17 April, the same day that Umra Khan fled across the border into Afghanistan with Low at his heels (his lands were subsequently divided up among his relatives), Kelly crossed the swift Chitral River.

At this time, Sher Afzal made his final desperate attempt to take the fortress at Chitral. On the evening of 16 April, the Pathans in the vicinity of the summer house commenced a drumming and general cacophony was so loud and prolonged that the British Garrison became convinced the noise was a diversion to cover up some other activity. This was indeed the case!

The tribesmen were mining the fort. At midnight, a sentry thought he heard the sound of a pick, but Townshend, when summoned, could detect nothing. At 11 a.m. the next morning, however, a Sikh non-commissioned officer heard what undoubtedly was tunnelling just 12 feet from the wall. Only once course remained to be followed. At 4 p.m., Lieutenant Harley, without benefit of covering fire, led a company of troops—101 men in all—armed with rifles and bayonets, on a mad dash across the 80 exposed yards to the summer house. The element of surprise was on their side and they were able to rout thirty or so of Umra Khan's Pathans holding the position. However, it was only a matter of time until the enemy would return in strength.

Harley desperately searched for the entrance to the mineshaft. It was found a few yards from the summer house, and the soldiers rapidly began carrying sacks of powder into the passage. The tribesmen were

now rallying to counter-attack, and Townshend, perceiving the danger, took every available man to the parapet and directed a withering fire upon the gathering Pathans. However, he could only delay, not halt, their advance. Urgent messages to return were sent to Harley, but he would not be hurried. Finally, the charge and 40 feet of fuse were laid, and Harley and his men, having set a match to the fuse, stormed out of the mine and back to the summer house.

The explosion was deafening; dirt and pieces of timber filled the air. In the confusion, Harley led a rush back to the fort. The sortie resulted in eight dead and thirteen wounded. When the dust cleared, it was seen the roof of the mine had collapsed, leaving an open trench to within 10 feet of the fort's wall! The destruction of the mine took the heart out of the besiegers and by the next day they had disappeared without a trace.[15]

On 19 April, Kelly and the relief force from Gilgit had arrived. It preceded by a few days General Low and the troops from Peshawar. Robertson later recalled the dramatic moment.

> … There were no extravagant greetings; I, for my part, welcomed them mechanically. All I could see were the dark-complexioned, sturdy Mazbis, looking admirably well, and much travel-stained … My mind was weary, and my life seemed fatigued also …[16]

Throughout the siege, relations between the opponents had been most courteous. Sher Afzal always conducted himself with strict rectitude. Umra Khan, in Robertson's eyes, was 'a high-bred Musalman gentleman to the last, than whom there is none in the world more courteous … I suppose,' the agent wrote,

> there is not a British officer in India who would not think himself lucky if, by making sacrifices for the brave Khan of Jandol, he could help that picturesque individual, who, at one point of his career, not long ago, was a kind of Napoleon in miniature.[17]

What more could be said than that he 'had behaved like a gentleman.'[18]

The relief of Chitral prompted untold joy and self-congratulation throughout the British empire. Once more civilization had triumphed over barbarity and vice. A leading article in the *Times* waxed eloquence:

> Military history records no more brilliant achievement than these so graphically described by our Special correspondent in his letters from Chitral… The Chitral expedition not only is one of the finest things of its size to be found in military annals, but it displays some of the most essential and fundamental qualities of military greatness in a perfection which cannot be surpassed in operations of any magnitude whatever. The courage which defies all odds of numbers and of circumstance; the indomitable fortitude which triumphs over every cause of mental depression and over the more deadly and insidious results of physical privation and exhaustion; the resource which improvises defence and turns to account every accident of the situation—these things have never had a more splendid manifestation in military operations upon any arena.[19]

The Younghusband brothers, who had accompanied Low's force, wove a didactic tale around the siege:

> … Just on the brink of disaster, the British forces came out triumphant; and once again in our fair island's story it was shown that British officers, even though they had not a single British soldier by them, and had only to trust to their own stout hearts and strong right arms, and to the influence they could exercise over men of subject races, and to the feeling of loyalty they could evoke from them, had been able to uphold the honour of the race; and the story of the defence and relief of Chitral will be handed down to posterity as one of the most brilliant chapters in the annals of Indian military history.[20]

The following year, Francis Younghusband again reflected on the triumph. 'What,' he asked,

> was the power by which six British officers, shut up in Chitral fort, hundreds of miles from the nearest British soldier, and with only native troops to rely on, were able to evoke such attachment from these men…? And how was it that the few British officers under Colonel Kelly were able, without the assistance of a single British soldier, and with none but these same men of India … to offer that timely succour to the Chitral Garrison?[21]

Younghusband thought he knew the answer. It was *moral superiority*. 'No European can mix with non-Christian races,' he wrote,

> without feeling his moral superiority over them. He feels, from the first contact with them, that, whatever may be their relative positions from an intellectual point of view, he is stronger morally than they are. And facts

> show that this feeling is a true one. It is not because we are any cleverer than the natives of India, because we have more brains or bigger heads than they have, that we rule India; but because we are stronger morally than they are. Our superiority over them is not due to more sharpness of intellect, but to that higher moral nature to which we have attained in the development of the human race...[22]

With the siege itself over, the more complex problem of future policy towards Chitral still remained. The British presence in Chitral had caused concern to both Gladstone's 4th Ministry (1892-1894) and more recently to Rosebery. Kimberley, at the India Office, had in 1893 sanctioned Younghusband's retention in Chitral merely as a temporary measure, and it was only on the insistence of the government of India, prompted by the advice of local officers, that he continued there throughout 1894 and was succeeded by Gurdon.[23] While the siege was still in progress, the secretary of state cautioned the government of India against committing itself to any definite policy towards Chitral: 'I hope, however, ... that you will take care that nothing is said or done to commit Government either way with regard to making new roads or retention of posts now occupied, or occupation of new posts.'[24]

The controversy over the retention of Chitral was to go well beyond the confines of the Viceroy's council in Calcutta or the cabinet offices in London. It was to become a major party political issue and haunt the halls of Parliament for many months. As Lord George Hamilton wrote to Elgin sometime later:

> This Chitral controversy is the only point upon which during the last 18 years there has on a frontier question of policy been a party difference of opinion...[25]

The storm was, however, slow to gather and the issues in April 1895 were just becoming clear. The questions to be answered were:

1. Should a British garrison be maintained in Chitral?
2. If the decision were in the affirmative, how feasible would be to open a road from Peshawar to Chitral in view of the impracticability of the Gilgit route?
3. If the Peshawar-Chitral road were agreed upon, would its construction involve a 'breach of faith' *vis-à-vis* the tribes, in view of the March proclamation?

4. If it were decided to abandon Chitral, would a damaging loss of prestige result among the tribes?
5. Would the Russians cross the Hindu Kush to fill the vacuum left by the British evacuation of Chitral?

Where Robertson thought (supported by Sir Charles Crosthwaite[26] and General Brackenbury[27]), that the best solution of the Chitral problem would be to cede large parts of the state to the Amir of Afghanistan,[28] the secretary of state was ambivalent.[29] The Viceroy felt no uncertainty as to what course to follow. He strongly opposed Robertson's scheme,[30] and on 18 April, he telegraphed the India Office that he and the council mutually agreed:

> that the military occupation of Chitral, supported by a road (to the) Peshawar border, is a matter of first importance ... We are unanimous in asking your permission to enter into negotiations with the tribes with the view to obtaining their consent to the opening up of this road...[31]

The secretary of state, Sir Henry Fowler, continued to be uncertain. He reiterated:

> I do not wish to be committed, to the policy of the military occupation of Chitral or maintaining a British officer there permanently, with or without support of the road, til [sic] Her Majesty's Government have had an opportunity to fully consider your detailed views and arguments....[32]

In a long dispatch of April, Fowler attempted to clarify his position. '...The original objects of maintaining a British officer in Chitral,' he wrote,

> were (1) to control its external affairs in a direction friendly to our interests; (2) to secure an effective guardianship over its northern passes; and (3) to keep watch over what goes on beyond those passes. The question now to be considered is whether in view of the recent changes in the situation ... the strategical and political importance of Chitral is such as to require that these cardinal points of our past policy should still be maintained even at risk and expense, and whether in that case there is any method of sufficiently safeguarding them, less costly and less hazardous than by placing a British officer there, and maintaining his position by a long line of supports whether to Gilgit or to Peshawar...[33]

But the viceroy persisted and immediately telegraphed the secretary of state:

> Narrative of events indicates withdrawal under present circumstances impossible, as it would leave country to complete anarchy and would render a settlement more difficult. In our opinion, we must also keep open the road from Peshawar for some time...[34]

Clearly, the government of India was becoming ever more convinced of the necessity of maintaining a strong grip on Chitral and of keeping a road between the state and Peshawar open. In the process, the independence of the tribes became increasingly threatened. In a dispatch of 8 May, the Viceroy contended that Chitral 'has not for the last twenty years been able to stand alone.' Furthermore, 'Chitral left to itself must, we feel assured, fall into the hands of Russia whenever she, after her frontier is advanced to the Oxus, chooses to take possession of it?'[35]

The recently concluded Pamirs Agreement (11 March 1895), it was argued, would define the relative positions of England and Russia, assuming the Amir's 'concurrence,' but 'it is necessary to take into account the possibility of a collapse of existing arrangements in Afghanistan.'[36]

What was developing was a major difference of opinion between a Liberal Viceroy and his fellow party members in the government at home. Rosebery did not view the Pamirs Agreement with the same degree of cynicism as Calcutta. He was notably disinclined to spend government funds to build and defend a road through hostile territory whose only function would be to guard against, what he assumed, was a virtually non-existent threat. On 3 May, Sir Arthur Godley, the permanent under-secretary in the India Office, wrote Elgin his assessment of the forthcoming cabinet decision on Chitral. He felt the majority of the ministers would be strongly against maintaining a British force or resident in Chitral—in short, anyone whom the British would be bound to succour if he were beleaguered or threatened. Some ministers, Godley thought, would like to turn all or part of Chitral over to the Amir of Afghanistan; others favoured the khan of Dir or another local chief.[37]

Elgin did his best to shore-up the deteriorating situation. On 31 May, he telegraphed Fowler that no annexation of territory was desired, that the road would be based on negotiations, and that it would not interfere

with the tribes of Dir and Swat, the only two states through which it would pass. The ruler of Swat, he explained, was assuming that the British planned to stay, and the Khan of Dir would probably fall from power if the British left! After the first few months, British troops would no longer be needed in the vicinity of the road, as it could be protected by the kind of local levies that had been so successful in Hunza.[38]

But Rosebery and his cabinet colleagues were not to be convinced. In a long letter dated Waterloo Day, 1895, the prime minister informed Elgin that, ' … We [the cabinet] were, what we rarely are, unanimous.' Rosebery felt the Russian threat was a chimera, and that all the occupation of Chitral and the road might accomplish would be to wake the sleeping giant.

He reminded Elgin that the Pamirs Agreement prevented the Russians approaching Chitral except as an act of war.

> When that Armageddon takes place, if we ever are at war with Russia, we shall have much more important things to attend to than the defence of Chitral, or the guarding of an impassable mountain barrier….[39]

Faced with his government's decision, Elgin had no choice but to comply.

A telegram dated 22 June suggested the division of Chitral; the western portion, or Chitral proper, being left to itself under the nominal suzerainty of Kashmir, while the eastern section was to be controlled from Gilgit and garrisoned by Kashmiri troops. Shuja-ul-Mulk would be deported to India and the two parts of Chitral might choose their own chief; Sher Afzal, however, would be excluded from candidacy.[40]

Fortunately for Elgin, before Rosebery's decision could be implemented, his government fell from office (over the cordite vote, not Chitral) and was replaced by a Conservative one under Lord Salisbury. Lord George Hamilton inherited the India Office, and the new cabinet immediately inaugurated a review of the Chitral policy, which was expected to consume some three weeks. When a telegram of 1 August asking for more information regarding the minimum strength necessary to occupy Chitral and protect the proposed road arrived,[41] Elgin, encouraged, immediately replied that no additions to the Indian army would be necessary; only one native regiment would have to be added to the force for the whole Gilgit-Chitral district.

The proposed garrison for Chitral consisted of two native infantry regiments, two guns of a mountain battery, and one company of sappers—the Pioneer regiment currently on duty was to be withdrawn. Headquarters would be moved from Chitral to Drosh, although the former town would continue to be protected by half a battalion. Robertson, the Viceroy reported, thought it would be possible to withdraw the garrisons from Ghizr and Mastuj, concentrating them instead at Gupis. The commander-in-chief urged the stationing, for a year or two, of a brigade of three native regiments—one mountain battery, one company of sappers on the Malakand Pass and with one of the regiments placed at Chakdara to guard the bridge over the Swat River. The road from Chakdara to Drosh was to be held by local levies, probably 500 from Dir and 250 from Swat.[42]

On 9 August, the long hoped for news reached the Viceroy. The Conservative government had reversed the decision of its Liberal predecessor. Chitral could remain in British hands. The road could be opened between Peshawar and Chitral, provided the conditions outlined by the Viceroy in his telegraph of 3 August could actually be met. 'Make no permanent arrangement for cantonment on Malakand and neighbourhood,'[43] the secretary of state, concluded. In a following letter, Hamilton emphasized that the proposals for the Malakand and its vicinity,' 'should be held over pending further details.'[44]

A Liberal Viceroy was now the ally of a Conservative prime minister and secretary of state in the implementation of a policy opposed by his own party. It was a situation the Liberals were not to leave unchallenged.

Another message on 9 August brought Elgin the first inklings of what was to develop into a major domestic political confrontation. 'Mr. Fowler thought that the proclamation to the tribes prevented any cantonment of troops being stationed outside our frontier proper,' Hamilton wrote to Elgin:

> I do not take so strong a view of the assurance given. Please to watch carefully what is done ... The House of Commons is very sensitive on such points, and assertions of breach of faith, even if unfounded, do much to discredit any policy, unless they can be offhand and effectively answered.[45]

Was a breach of faith really involved in the government of India's determination to open the road from Peshawar to Chitral? 'The sole

object of the Government of India,' the proclamation had stated, 'is to put an end to the present, and prevent any future, unlawful aggression on Chitral territory, and, as soon as this object has been attained, the force will be withdrawn.' The immediate menace had, of course, been removed, but was the caveat preventing future unlawful aggression sufficient justification for the maintenance of a permanent road through tribal territory? Certainly, the government of Great Britain, which had been in power until mid-1895, had not thought so. The proclamation had gone on to say, 'The Government of India have no intention of permanently occupying any territory … or of interfering with the independence of the tribes …' The road, as now envisaged, seemed manifestly to violate this undertaking.

Elgin claimed that he merely wished to negotiate with the rulers of Dir and Swat, assuring them that all the British desired was to open the road and see to its security. He would leave the people their independence.[46] However, could negotiations between Swat, Dir, and British India really be considered conversations between equals, where the lesser parties would be in a position to refuse the wishes of the greater?

Clearly not—and Elgin knew this. He telegraphed Whitehall that he was inclined to avoid open negotiations with the tribes, but that his officers were confident that they would assent to the road passing through their territory.[47] How was it possible to reconcile vows of non-interference with the proposed stationing of formidable forces adjacent to tribal territory?

On the other hand, was it really in context to talk of a 'breach of faith'? The proclamation was either naive or obviously aimed at influencing opinion in Britain and British India. The tribesmen did not understand such niceties. Thus the struggle that was building up in Westminster had an unreal quality to it and was much more associated with domestic politics than Great Britain's sacred honour and the future of a vital frontier.

In view of the new situation, it became necessary to install Shuja-ul-Mulk, with full pomp and dignity, 'in the name of Kashmir as suzerain, and with the authority of the Government of India,' as Mehtar of Chitral.

The Kushwakt tracts of eastern Chitral were not to be included within the new ruler's domain. This section would, in future, be controlled directly from Gilgit, and the British agent at Gilgit would, on behalf of Kashmir, appoint and pay a governor and headman.

Although the mehtar, in conjunction with three advisors, ostensibly controlled the internal affairs of what remained of the state, all real power lay in the hands of the British political officer, who was in turn responsible to the British agent at Gilgit.

Trafficiking slaves was to be absolutely prohibited, and the mehtar was to receive a subsidy of Rs. 1000 a month, with an additional annual grant of Rs. 8000 to compensate for the loss of the Kushwakt country. 'The Government of India will provide guard for Mehtar during minority, and will control foreign relations as usual in protected States in return for security from aggression.'[48]

Although a letter of 17 August, which spelled out Chitral's future in great detail, was at pains to point out that the internal administration of the state was to be left in the Mehtar's hands, the assistant political agent could at anytime refer any action of the ruler and his advisors for the 'opinion' of his superior in Gilgit. Furthermore, 'The Government of India cannot countenance in a State under their protection a Government that permits the murderous outrages which have unfortunately been too frequent in Chitral…'.[49]

On Monday, 2 September 1895 at 5:30 p.m., the actual coronation ceremony took place. Sir George Robertson, recently knighted, and now the British agent at Gilgit, was accompanied by Major Aylmer, commanding at Chitral, and Captain Minchin. The assistant British agent, Chitral and all the British officers of the Garrison rode down to the fort, where they were met by Shuja-ul-Mulk and the chief Chitrali princes and nobles. A salute of eleven guns was fired and the guard of honour of the 25th Punjab Infantry presented arms. The British agent and the mehtar-designate then took their seats on a raised dais, Shuja on a chair which was presented to his father, Aman-ul-Mulk by the government of India, and which Aman-ul-Mulk had used as a throne.

On Robertson's right hand were seated the British and native officers in order of seniority. On Shuja's left sat the Mehtarjaos (princes) of Chitral and state dignitaries of high rank. Other Chitralis of note took their places in front of the dais, while beyond them, on every spot where a view of the proceedings might be obtained, stood the common people.

Robertson rose and addressed the assembled throng. He explained the relationship that would exist between Chitral, Kashmir and British India. Throwing a handsome *kimkhab choga* over the young boy's shoulders, he proclaimed:

I now formally declare Shuja-ul-Mulk Mehtar of the whole of the Katur Country, in the name of the Maharaja of Kashmir as his suzerain and with the authority and approval of the Government of India; and I call upon you, one and all, to accord him and his Government loyal and implicit obedience. May the bountiful season which witnesses the beginning of Shuja-ul-Mulk's reign be a propitious sign of its general prosperity. God grant that peace and happiness may be the lot of both him and his subjects, and that the sad events of the beginning of the year may cease to be remembered, save as the half-memory of a terrible dream…[50]

For all intents and purposes, Chitral could now be considered just another of the minor princely states of British-ruled India.

The garrison of Chitral was to consist of two battalions of native infantry with two guns of a mountain battery, two Maxim guns, and a company of sappers. The town of Chitral itself was to be held by three companies of infantry, with one of the Maxim guns; one company of infantry was to be at Ghairat and the remainder at Kila Drosh. The 32nd Pioneers would be recalled from Gilgit, leaving 200 men there as an escort to the British agent.[51] Meanwhile, the withdrawal of the Chitral relief force commenced on 20 September and was concluded on 1 October.

That the home government was as enthusiastic about these new arrangements as the locals, is open to doubt. The situation was coming under increasingly heavy pressure in Parliament. In the Commons, it had begun mildly enough. On 2 May, Dr Macgregor, representing Invernessshire, had asked the Liberal secretary of state for India, Henry Fowler, '…what business we have in Chitral at all and what right we have invading a territory against the will of the natives and putting them to death in defence of their homes.'

The secretary of state claimed in response, '…We have not invaded a territory. We are rescuing the representatives of the Queen and people of Great Britain who have been attacked (Cheers).'[52]

Some three months later, the issue arose again. This time Arthur Balfour was forced to defend the Conservatives' Chitral policy. 'Putting aside all questions of strategy and all questions of foreign policy,' he proclaimed, 'it would be a serious blow to our prestige if, having once gone to those territories, we had to abandon them … to us and to us alone must they [the tribes] look as a suzerain power.'[53]

By September, the Liberals had gathered for the attack. The first volley was fired by Fowler in a debate on the East Indian revenues. British honour was sacred, he argued, and the government had broken

its word to the tribes. Besides, the dispatches in the Chitral blue book had been significantly bowdlerized. The former secretary of state was followed by Mr J.M. Maclean, the member of Cardiff, who moved:

> That this House views with apprehension the continued increase in the burdens of Indian taxpayers, caused by the annexation or military occupation of large areas of unproductive territories on the land frontier of India.

The motion was seconded by M.M. Bhownaggree, an Indian member of Parliament, but was, of course, destined to fail.[54]

In the other house, Lord Rosebery, the recently deposed prime minister, mustered the same arguments he had used in his Waterloo Day letter to India. The Hindu Kush was sufficiently impenetrable to make Chitral practically impervious to attack, and with the conclusion of the Pamirs Agreement, the continued occupation of Chitral would only arouse Russian suspicions. Rosebery also contended that the continuation of the British grip on Chitral constituted a 'breach of faith' with the people of the area, in view of the March proclamation. 'You are breaking faith,' he asserted,

> with the people among whom your campaign has taken place. Do not believe that these mountain tribes, because they are savage, are unaware of the binding obligation of a declaration such as you have put forward. You went to Chitral declaring that you were going back as soon as you had accomplished your object.[55]

The prime minister, Lord Salisbury, argued in reply that it was, after all, under the aegis of the party now in opposition that Chitral had been occupied in the first place. He contended that the occupation of Chitral and the maintenance of a road from Peshawar would force no increase in the total military budget of India, and he vehemently denied 'that anything we have done, or intend to do, can by the very harshest construction, be construed to break the promises which we have entered…'

Furthermore, his government held, 'the abandonment of Chitral to be … most unwise as a question of moral strategy… It would have a…detrimental effect upon the tribes which lie between the occupied ground and the outer frontiers of India…'[56]

Hamilton wrote to Elgin: '…Parliament met yesterday for business, and our decision has been well-received, both in and outside the House…'[57] Upon reflection, the secretary of state concluded:

> The Chitral controversy has brought home to us here the extreme difficulty of retiring from any position, or station, once occupied, even although our connection with the locality may have been recent and temporary.[58]

It was a sentiment with which secretaries of state for India (as well as for the Colonies) both previous and future ones, would have heartily agreed.

The 'breach of faith' issue reached the floor of Parliament again in February 1896. In the Commons, Sir William Wedderburn, formerly a ranking member of the Indian Civil Service, moved that the House express its 'regret' at the occupation of Chitral. He had read in the Anglo-Indian press that,

> …the object of the expedition to Chitral was to show we had effective control over the mountainous regions, so that when the treaty with Russia was made, we might show we were in effective possession of those regions to put them within our sphere of influence…

If this allegation were true, Wedderburn wondered whether the Pamirs Agreement was merely a delimitation by Russia and Britain of their respective spheres of influence, or whether it was actually an extension of the northern frontier of India.

Defending the government's position, Hamilton (supported by George N. Curzon, destined to be Elgin's successor as Viceroy) emphasized the 'beneficial' aspects of the occupation of Chitral. He pointed out that had Britain not preserved order in the state, it would have been an open 'invitation to some other country to come in and perform the duties which they had abdicated.' Imperial Britain could be proud that:

> The result of…[its] occupation was that the slave trade had ceased…So far from their occupation being regarded in a hostile spirit…they [the natives of the country] welcomed the English occupation because it had inaugurated a period of security which they had not known before (hear, hear!)…the occupation had been an unmixed success.

For those more interested in practical considerations, the secretary of state held out the promise of commercial advantage, for 'Chitral

was,' he claimed erroneously, 'a much richer country than was anticipated.'

On the important question of the 'breach of faith', Hamilton forcefully returned the Liberals' fire. 'The Proclamation was issued to the tribes who lived between the territory of Chitral and Peshawar'. He contended it 'had absolutely nothing to do with the people of Chitral, because our suzerainty and authority were already there asserted.' He then informed the government's detractors, with satisfaction, that 'the heads of the intervening tribes petitioned the Political Officer, asking to be incorporated into British Territory.' And in triumphant accusation, he concluded:

> When all their tangible arguments in reference to occupation were annihilated, the supporters of the late Government fell back on breach of faith ... It was not creditable to English politics that they should bring this charge of want of honour and breach of faith against a member of their own party [Lord Elgin], who was carrying out a policy which he believed to be consistent with national and Imperial interest.[59]

If the Conservatives thought that the debate of 17 February 1896 spelled the end of the 'breach of faith' controversy, they were destined to be wrong. It was to drag on for many more months and to engender increasing bitterness, especially on the part of Elgin, who felt betrayed by his one-time associates in the Liberal government. He wrote to Hamilton:

> ... You will, excuse me, perhaps, if the sight of 'Lord Elgin's breach of faith' in the Reuters' telegrams throughout the world, excites in me some feeling of resentment. And there is one thing far more serious. This is not the moment at which any patriotic Englishman could wish to see the Government of the Queen of India discredited in the eyes of the natives of the country. Not a syllable has been uttered here about the terrible breach of faith; but it will be strange indeed if the Native Press do not take their cue from speeches which offer so many tempting examples of denunciation. That the leaders of the party to which I have belonged should be deaf to these considerations is to me a sincere regret.[60]

Not that the 'native press' had been entirely quiet. *Jagadhitechchu*, a Marathi weekly published in Poona, asked:

> How shall we characterise this mad ambition and foolish greed for more territory ... Government is following an entirely foolish and fatal policy ...

> which will eventually end in the total wreck of the whole Empire. Then they will regret of their foolish forward policy which civilisation and Christianity alike condemn.[61]

Pratod, another Marathi weekly, was even more forceful:

> ... The Chitral episode clearly teaches us what weight to attach to the solemn pledges of high functionaries as Governors and Viceroys ... His Excellency had, at the outset of the campaign, clearly and unmistakably pledged his word that the independence of the wild tribes, through whose territory the expedition was to pass, would be maintained intact. How many times have we been deceived by such specious promises, that are true to the ear, but broken to hope? How many pledges have been broken in the past and reduced us to servitude? Is it not a pity that we should still connive at such things and endure them passively?[62]

On the other hand, *The Times* strongly supported the government. '...Unless we retain Chitral and retain the Dir road to it,' a leading article of 15 June 1896, averred, 'we shall have thrown away many lives and spent over a million in money without obtaining any commensurate advantage. If we do retain Chitral and the Dir road, we shall have added materially to the defences of our Indian Empire.'

Over the ensuing months, the future of the British military presence on the frontier aroused partisan passions in Parliament, especially after a major tribal revolt erupted along the border during the last half of 1897. As the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, put it: 'To annex or not to annex the Frontier area? That is the question.'[63]

In the autumn of 1897, Herbert Asquith, a future Liberal foreign secretary and prime minister, and John Morley, destined to be a great secretary of state for India, travelled across Scotland, and invited bewildered audiences to consider the grievances of the men of Dir and Swat, of whose existence they were scarcely aware.[64]

A particularly bitter debate re-ignited the coals of animosity in the Commons on 14 and 15 February 1898. John Walton of Leeds moved an amendment to the address in answer to the Queen's speech from the throne, which condemned the occupation of Chitral, and although the motion was foredoomed, it inspired more than a little invective. Sir W. Lawson, a member from Cumberland, Cockermouth, contended that,

... in these latter days ... morality has been banished into infinite space. I was very much struck by some lines that Mr. Frederick Harrison quoted in a speech of the other day. They ran as follows:

There is no law of God or man
That England need obey
Take what you can, and all you can,
and keep it while you may.

I do not know where Mr. Harrison got them, but I think they might form an addition to the National Anthem... The policy of the great Englander is profit by plunder, while the policy of the little Englander is profit by peace.[65]

When all was said and done, however, the Conservatives were too firmly in power to be more than embarrassed by Chitral. In late Victorian Britain, governments did not fall on relatively minor Imperial issues.[66] It should not be forgotten that throughout the nineteenth century, nothing was decided to empty the Halls of Parliament more quickly than a debate on India! Lord George Hamilton may have been inconvenienced, Lord Elgin annoyed, but the frontier rising was quenched and Chitral and the road connecting it with Peshawar remained firmly in British hands.

NOTES

1. IOL, Pol. and Sec. Home Correspondence, Morier to Salisbury, No. 20, 20 January 1892.
2. Ibid., Morier to Salisbury, No. 14, Conference, 3 February 1892.
3. Ibid., Salisbury to Morier, No. 26, Conf., 2 February 1892.
4. Ibid., Salisbury to Morier, tel. no. 9, 12 February 1892.
5. Ibid., Morier to Salisbury, 14 February 1892.
6. Ibid.
7. Alder, op. cit., p. 285.
8. IOL, Sec./Front. 99, 12 June 1894, Enclosure 1.
9. G.S. Robertson, *Chitral*, (London, 1898) 53.
10. Arthur Swinson, *North-West Frontier* (London, 1967), pp. 209-210.
11. Here Lieutenants Edwards and Fowler were captured during a truce while watching a polo game put on by their opponents. After they had been bound and the British position carried by the enemy, the game resumed. In their captivity, which lasted until the siege of Chitral was lifted, they were very well treated by Umra Khan.

12. C. 7864, extract No. 66, Government of India to Secretary of State, 17 April 1895, Enclosures, Secretary to the Govt. of India for Dept. to Chief Secretary, Punjab, 14 March 1895, C. 7864, p. 30.
13. Robertson, op. cit. pp. 284-5.
14. Ibid., p. 291.
15. British casualties during the siege numbered forty-one killed and sixty-two wounded. Robertson, op. cit., p. 362.
16. Ibid., p. 359.
17. Ibid., p. 150.
18. Ibid., p. 361.
19. *The Times*, June 6, 1896.
20. G.J. and F.E. Younghusband, *The Relief of Chitral*, (London, 1895), 175.
21. F.E. Younghusband, *The Heart of a Continent*, (London, 1896), p. 397.
22. Ibid., pp. 396-7.
23. C. 7864, 22, Extract No. 34, Secretary of State to Government of India, 3 August 1894.
24. Ibid., telegram, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 30 March 1895.
25. IOL, Elgin Paps., Hamilton to Elgin, 23 December 1897.
26. IOL, Pol. and Secretary Home Correspondence, note by Sir C.H.T. Crosthwaite, 28 April 1895.
27. IOL, Pol. and Sec. Dept., Minute by Lt. General H. Brackenbury, 28 April 1895.
28. IOL, Sec./Front., 110, 4 June 1895, Enclosure 101, Robertson to Secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department, no date.
29. C. 7864, telegram, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 19 April 1895.
30. IOL, Pol. and Sec. Home Corres., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 22 June 1895.
31. C. 7864, telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 18 April 1895.
32. Ibid., telegram, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 25 April 1895.
33. IOL, 45, extract, Main Office No. 15, Secretary of State to Government of India, 26 April 1895.
34. C. 7864, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 25 April 1895.
35. IOL, Sec./Front. 89, 8 May 1895.
36. Ibid.
37. IOL, Elgin Paps., No. 53, Godley to Elgin, 3 May 1895.
38. Ibid., telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 31 May 1895.
39. IOL, Elgin Paps., No. 76, Rosebery to Elgin, Waterloo Day, 1895. Most official Indian opinion was strongly on Elgin's side. Sir Mortimer Durand wrote to the viceroy from Teheran, where he was serving as British Minister: 'I am very sorry Lord Rosebery decided to throw up Chitral and hope the decision may not be carried out now. It has been, and is, a great opportunity of getting a grip upon our natural line of defence, the mountain belt which stretches from the Pamirs to the sea. We have fixed ourselves firmly at the southern end—Baluchistan. We have also organized a centre of control north of the Hindu-Kush. We have now to deal with the central section of the border, which the Amir had admitted to be within our sphere of influence…It seems to me that, while Russia is weak in Asia and all is quiet, we ought to make sure of everything up to the Afghan border…'
40. C. 7864, telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 22 June 1895.
41. Ibid., telegram, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 1 August 1895.
42. IOL, Elgin Paps., 597, telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 3 August 1895.

43. Ibid., 442, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 9 August 1895.
44. IOL, Sec. 30, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 16 August 1895.
45. IOL, Elgin Paps., 28, Secretary of State to Viceroy, 9 August 1895.
46. IOL, Pol. and Sec. Home Corres., telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 10 August 1895.
47. Ibid., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 3 August 1895.
48. C. 8037 (1896), telegram, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 18 August 1895.
49. IOL, Sec./Front. 172, 27 August 1895, Enclosure 9, No. 3220 F., Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, to Sir George Robertson, 17 August 1895.
50. IOL, Sec. and Pol. Dept., Chitral and Peshawar Road Series, part VIII, K. F./D.N. 1623 F. demi-off, 4, Robertson to Captain H. Daly, 12 September 1895, encloses report of durbar held at Chitral for the installation of Mehtar Shuja-ul-Mulk by Captain Minchin.
51. IOL, Sec./Front. 199, 9 October 1895.
52. *Hansard*, 2 May 1895.
53. Ibid., 15 August 1895.
54. Ibid., 3 September 1895.
55. Ibid., Lords, 15 August 1895.
56. Ibid.
57. IOL, Hamilton Paps., Secretary of State to Viceroy, 16 August 1895.
58. Ibid., Secretary of State to Viceroy, 15 September 1895.
59. *Hansard*, 17 February 1896. The motion failed: Ayes 79, Noes 193.
60. IOL, Hamilton Papers, Viceroy to Secretary of State, 28 October 1897.
61. IOL, Reports of the Native Press (Bombay), *Jagadi Techchhu*, 25 August 1895.
62. Ibid., *Pratod*, 16 September 1895.
63. IOL, Hamilton Paps., Viceroy to Secretary of State, 3 November 1897.
64. Nonsense poets and others were, however, intrigued by the strange names of the Northwest. 'Who, or why, or which, or *what*, … is the Ahkond of Swat?' asked Edward Lear. George Thomas Lanigan mourned the death of the same ruler: 'Your Great Ahkoond Is Dead! That Swats the matter!' And Lanigan also wrote a 'Dirge of the Moolla of Kotal':
    Alas, unhappy land, ill-fated spot Kotal—
    though where or what on the earth Kotal is,
    the bard has forgot; Further than this indeed
    he knoweth not—It borders upon Swat!'
65. *Hansard*, 14 February 1898.
66. Hamilton remarked in a letter to Elgin, 'This Chitral episode was clearly a party political issue. The solid front presented by the Liberals should not be interpreted to mean they were united in their outlook on Imperial matters in general, for this was certainly not the case.' IOL, Elgin Papers, Hamtilon to Elgin, 23 December 1847.

6

KASHMIR IN THE MODERN ERA (1901–1947)

The previous history of the state of Kashmir had been turbulent chiefly due to external factors. At the turn of the century, most British concerns in the north—for which Kashmir was the fountainhead—had been resolved and the story hence becomes one of internal strife and agitation for change within a largely Muslim state under the absolute rule of a Hindu Maharaja. In essence, British India had essentially consolidated its position along the Afghan, Russian and Chinese frontiers. Among other things, this placed troublesome areas such as Chitral within the boundaries of British India.

The formation in 1901 of the North West Frontier Province simplified local problems by switching the major responsibility for the conduct of affairs from distant Calcutta to more accessible Peshawar. Relations with Afghanistan were more cordial than they had been for many decades, and the supposed Russian threat seemed to have receded. As a consequence, the British were prepared to loosen their grip on Kashmir at least to some degree, and in 1905, Curzon approved the dissolution of the Kashmir State Council and a further transfer of power to Pratap Singh.

Under the new order of things, the Maharaja was to be assisted by a chief minister and ministers in charge of home, revenue, and judicial affairs. These last three ministers were to communicate with the Maharaja through the chief minister, and an abstract of all orders and decisions were to be delivered to the British resident for his approval. The new 'Constitution' made it clear that the controlling hand was still that of the resident. No resolution previously passed by the now defunct State Council could be modified or repealed without his permission. The appointment of all ministers and other important officials could only be implemented with the concurrence of the government of India.[1]

The combination of Japan's victory over the Russians in the Russo-Japanese War and Curzon's partition of Bengal in 1905 served to bring on an explosion of resentment throughout much of India. The Japanese triumph showed that Asians could after all defeat Europeans in battle and encouraged the Indians to resist assaults against their embryonic national consciousness. Furthermore, the rise of the Indian National Congress combined with the increased power of the 'Radicals' in the British Parliament, gave encouragement both to Indian moderates and those nationalists wo were more inclined to violent dissent.

The development of political activism and awareness progressed at a slower rate in Kashmir than it did in India itself. Quasi-political organizations did not appear until the twentieth century. However, they were more concerned with religious and social questions than political issues. In addition, they were divided along strictly religious lines.

The first Muslim socio-religious organization, founded in Srinagar in 1905, was the Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam. It was totally apolitical and concerned with education and Muslim self-awareness. Ten years later, the first Hindu organization in the state, the Arya Kumar Sabha, essentially a branch of the Arya Samaj, was born. Again, it was interested in religious and social questions. The Dogra Sabha antedated the Arya Kumar Sabha by some twelve years but was largely an instrument of the ruling oligarchy. Other Hindu associations included the Dharma Sabha, the Fraternal Society and the Tavak Sabha.

The story in neighbouring Punjab was quite different. Riots erupted throughout 1907 and 1908, two of the most severe being in Lahore and Rawalpindi. Any disturbance of the *status quo* there was deemed to cause concern in neighbouring Kashmir.

On 13 May 1907, Major Francis Younghusband, the resident in Kashmir, wrote to Sir Louis Dane, the secretary to the government of India in the foreign department, concerning the air of expectancy the riots had created throughout the valley. The Muslims, he reported, were disheartened by the fear of Hindu ascendancy in India, while the Hindus were full of 'wild hopes that our power may be shaken'.

Although the Maharaja was absolutely opposed to the agitation, Younghusband contended that:

> ...if Government showed any lack in determination in dealing with the present agitation, or if there were to occur in Cashmere any fracas between Europeans and Indians, the electricity in the atmosphere would discharge itself with a dangerous explosion.'

With his usual bombast, Younghusband told Pratap Singh:

> ...The people could never *finally* prevail against the might and resources of the British Empire. It was, therefore, most wise in one holding so lofty and influential position as His Highness to now at the outset show poor, ignorant people the dangers they were running into, and save them from the perils of light-heartedly following irresponsible agitators...windy headed men...posing before the people as their leaders, standing on platform and receiving...acclamations of the people as if they were born and natural leaders. But they were not. The leaders of the people were the Chiefs....[2]

In 1903, Younghusband reported that he had detected too much interference by the Maharaja in the affairs of the state. He tried to influence the High Court excessively and would not delegate enough authority to his brother, the chief minister, Sir Amar Singh, whom Younghusband favoured. In addition, there was increased antagonism being displayed towards Europeans, especially by the Punjabis in the valley, who held most of the major posts. These Punjabis preferred to have anyone in state positions other than Kashmiris.[3]

Although the cauldron of Hindu-Muslim enmity and anti-British sentiment bubbled just beneath the surface, agitation did not boil over in Kashmir for some years. Minor eruptions occurred from time to time. The British government was forever vigilant against the threat of sedition. While the Viceroy thanked the Maharaja for his loyalty,[4] Younghusband was at the same time urged to prevent the entry of seditious Bengali sadhus into the state.[5]

The end of the First World War brought the beginnings of political activism to Kashmir. The major Muslim organization was still the Anjuman and after the War, and the inception of the Khilafat movement, it became increasingly concerned with Muslim rights in Hindu-ruled Kashmir. But the Anjuman was too conservative for most of the younger Kashmiris, and it eventually self-immolated in a series of arid, sectarian and doctrinal conflicts which in turn spawned rival associations, but of little significance. The Arya Kumar Sabha, for its part, assumed a Gandhian political stance and consequently, enlisted little support from either Hindus or Muslims, thus rendering it, for all intents and purposes, ineffectual.

Still complacency was not to be the order of the day. When students at the government school collected subscriptions for the Lahore Student Newspaper, *Punjabee* and wandered through the streets of Srinagar

shouting 'Bande Mataram', the resident insisted that some of them be expelled. Responding to the resident's alarm, Raja Amar Singh wrote: 'A movement like this which has the effect of inculcating the students' minds with the germs of mischievous political ideas should immediately be nipped in the bud.' District magistrates and the police were instructed 'to keep a close watch over all agitation...and were authorized to adopt measures consistent with the situation to prevent and put a stop to seditious and politically dangerous movements.'[6]

Despite continuing signs of unrest, such as the strike of students in Prince of Wales College in Jammu, the subsequent journey of 150 students to Gujranwalla to attend a conference on student non-cooperation convened by Lala Lajpat Rai, and local support for the Khilafat movement, Maharaja Pratap Singh felt that he had sufficiently manifested his loyalty to petition Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy, for the full restoration of his powers. He saw such an action as a vindication for an old man approaching the end of his life.

The Viceroy was willing to agree, provided the Maharaja gave a confidential undertaking to seek the advice of the resident on all matters, but especially frontier questions. However, to this the aged prince objected, saying that to agree to such a circumscription would not mean the return of his independence but rather the institutionalization of his subservience.[7] The Viceroy allowed himself to be convinced and limited his demand to required consultation on frontier matters and important administrative changes.[8] A durbar held in Jammu in March 1921 finally restored to Pratap Singh the status he so fervently desired.[9]

As part of the new administrative structure, a Constitutional act was passed. The Maharaja appointed what was essentially an Executive Committee, once again called the State Council. It was to consist of the commander-in-chief, a senior member, a foreign member, a revenue member, a law member, a home member, a member for commerce and industry, and in addition to the Maharaja as president, a secretary.

The heir apparent, Hari Singh was to be the senior and foreign member. Maula Bakhsh would deal with commerce, Jawak Singh with revenue and A.D. Kakim with home and law. Although there were both reserved and unreserved subjects, ostensibly all administrative decisions were to come before the council. The Maharaja was to maintain the right of veto.

Pratap was prepared to go even further. He proposed the establishment of a High Court of Justice and a legislative assembly.

While the British accepted the former, they were frightened by the proposed legislative assembly, as they were by all representative political institutions on the subcontinent.[10] They continued to distrust Pratap Singh and by 1923 had convinced him to step down as president of the Council. In the following year, he ceased to attend all meetings.[11]

The Kashmir State Government's paranoia was not unusual in a subcontinent in constant fear of internal disruption. Even journals as benign as the *Strand Magazine* and the *Modern Review* were denied entry into the state. This attitude also applied to societies devoted to almost anything including religion. All of these groups and all suspicious visitors (a designation which apparently included all Bengalis) were under the constant scrutiny of the resident and the Kashmir government.

The year 1924 was filled with turmoil. In July, labour unrest at a government-owned silk factory in Srinagar was suppressed with some loss of life. In October, Lord Reading, now the Viceroy, visited Kashmir and much to the Maharaja's consternation was presented with a petition by the Muslim community demanding, among other things, property rights for peasants on the land they tilled; greater representation for the Muslim population in the State service; improved Muslim education; the abolition of any vestiges of *begar* (forced labour); and restoration of all mosques still in the hands of the government. Other hostile demonstrations sullied the Viceroy's visit and presaged a far from happy future for Gulab Singh's heirs.[12]

A year later in 1925, Pratap Singh died and was replaced on the *gadi* by his nephew, Hari Singh, son of Amar Singh. The new ruler had been educated under British auspices in India. His apotheosis brought with it hopes of liberal reform. And indeed he quickly promulgated the Agriculturists' Relief Regulation, which relieved cultivators from the usurious grasp of money lenders as well as the Compulsory Primary Education Act, which among other things prohibited the marriage of boys before they were 18 and girls prior to attaining the age of 14. The Maharaja had already repealed the marriage tax that was collected only from Muslims.

Finally, the new ruler announced that his only religion was 'justice' and he attended *Eid* prayers in Srinagar. However, much still remained to be done. The whole body of Kashmiri law protected Hindus at the expense of Muslims. Draconian penalties for cow killing remained in force, as did a law that deprived anyone who changed his religion of

all his inherited property. Only Hindu Rajputs (as opposed to Muslims) were allowed to bear arms.

Early optimism was soon forgotten as Hari Singh proclaimed a new Constitutional Act which increased his powers but reformed the High Court. He was accused, with some justice, of profligately wasting the state's resources for his own purposes, and of replacing Punjabis in the higher echelons of the Kashmir service with Dogras. Rajputs, Dogras, Kangra Rajputs, Gurkhas and Sikhs manned the state's military to the exclusion of Muslim Kashmiris. Although the term 'state subject' was finally defined and state employment limited to this class, the educated Hindu Pandits again benefited rather than the Muslims. The Maharaja resumed the presidency of the Council under the provisions of the new Constitutional Act.[13]

The Maharaja seemed blind to the increased destitution being faced by shawl embroiderers, paper mâché artists, petty shopkeepers, and workmen in general. Sir Albion Bannerji, who served Hari Singh as foreign and political minister of state, resigned and in his valedictory wrote:

> …there is no touch between the Government and the people. No suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom…. It has at present little or no sympathy with people's wants and grievances….[14]

Despite the continuing efforts by the resident, and his British prime minister, G.E.C. Wakefield, the Maharaja failed to seal Kashmir off from the political and social influences of India, and particularly the neighbouring Punjab. The task was obviously beyond them.

In Lahore, the All-India Kashmir Muslim Conference was formed and with the assistance of Punjabi Muslims, scholarship opportunities for Kashmiri Muslims were developed in British India. One of those taking advantage of this opportunity was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, who received an M.Sc. Degree from Aligarh University. He returned to his home in Kashmir only to find that the sole appointment available to him was a junior teacher's position in the government high school in Srinagar, paying Rs. 60 per annum. He discovered that his superiors were less qualified than him and that one of the department heads, a Dogra Rajput, was illiterate.

In 1930, Sheikh Abdullah and some colleagues founded the Fateh Kadal Reading Room party in Srinagar, which became a centre for the

discussion of Muslim grievances. Other Muslim organizations were also born. They included the Young Men's Mohammedan Association centred in Jammu and the above-mentioned All-India Kashmir Muslim Conference. Abdullah was quickly rewarded for his political activities by being transferred to a remote part of the state. He promptly resigned and henceforth devoted his full energies to political activities.

On 29 April 1931, in Jammu, the Imam was delivering the *Khutba* (sermon) at an *Eid* service in which he referred to the indignities heaped on Moses and the Israelites by the Pharaoh. The Hindu sub-inspector of police, Babu Khem Chand, who was in attendance, saw in the reference a veiled assault on the Maharaja and the Dogra government of Kashmir and stopped the service. This incident ignited a fire that had long been smouldering. Suddenly reports of other assaults on Muslims by Hindus came to the surface.

In one purported incident, Hindus prevented Muslims from using a local source of water. In another, a Muslim constable was supposedly reciting the Quran in a Jammu police barracks when a Hindu colleague, Laboo Ram by name, took umbrage, seized the Quran and threw it on the floor. The supposed occurrences received wide publicity and added to an increasingly tense atmosphere. When a delegation of Jammu Muslims sought a promised audience with the Maharaja, they were denied admission.

The leader of the agitation in Jammu was the Young Men's Mohammedan Association. In the pivotal city of Srinagar, the counterpart was Abdullah's Reading Room party whose leadership at this time consisted of Abdullah, Ghulam Ahmed Asahi, Moulvi Mohammad Yussuf Shah (the mirwaiz of Kashmir), Mirwaiz Hamadini, Syed Hassan Shah, Saad-ud-Din Shawl and Munshi Shihab-ud-Din Abdullah. Abdullah and Yussuf Shah were the driving force behind the party. It was at a protest meeting held on 8 June at the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar that Sheikh Abdullah gave his maiden political speech.

Almost two weeks later, on 21 June, at another meeting, Abdul Qadeer, a non-Kashmiri in the service of an officer of the King's Own Yorkshire Infantry Regiment, who was vacationing in Kashmir, leapt to his feet to denounce the Dogra rule and the indignities to which Muslims in the State were subjected. He was promptly arrested and charged with having delivered a seditious speech. Four hearings from 6 to 10 July caused rising excitement and hostility within the Muslim

population of Srinagar, and as a consequence, it was decided to hold Qadeer's trial in jail itself.

As the subsequent inquiry report indicated: 'Nineteen men were usually on duty at the jail. They were armed with rifles, but these so-called weapons were ancient muzzle-leaders incapable of being fired. Despite the arrival of reinforcements, the police were unable to overcome a crowd of some four to five thousand that had gathered for the proceedings. To exacerbate the situation, the assemblage was informed that its presence was unlawful. Soon violence erupted and the military, which had arrived on the scene, were too late to re-establish order. The first volley of rifle fire was directed into the air. But when that produced no visible effect, the soldiers lowered their sights and some twelve deaths resulted. The rioting now spread and resulted in the looting of Hindu shops by Muslims.[15]

Rumours abounded. In addition to the incidents already described, it was asserted that a defiled Quran had been discovered in a latrine. This further aroused the Muslims.

Concomitantly, it was reported that the body of a murdered Pandit (Hindu) girl had been found in a drain. This infuriated the Hindus.

14 August was declared 'Kashmir Day' and was to be so celebrated by Indian nationalists. Twelve days later, a temporary truce was concluded between the warring parties. But it was destined not to last.

On 21 September, Abdullah was arrested for making seditious speeches. The next day, serious rioting again broke out in Srinagar and four persons were killed by troops.

On 23 September, a large protest meeting was held in Islamabad and another clash with troops resulted in nineteen deaths. At the same time, a crowd of 15,000 gathered in Srinagar and so intimidated the authorities that no arrests were made. On 25 September an Indian police inspector was beaten to death in Shupian.

Much of the blame for these occurrences was placed on the Maharaja's prime minister, Raja Hari Kishen Kaul, an ex-civil servant from the Punjab who had replaced G.E.C. Wakefield after the July disturbances. The government of India characterized him as a 'noted intriguer' and urged his replacement by another British officer.

The government of India also advised the Maharaja to pay increased attention to Muslim grievances, such as the cow killing ordinance and the prohibition in effect in Kashmir, but not in British India, of the Friday sermon at Muslim religious services and the call to prayer. The durbar was advised to request the temporary placement of a European

police officer to be inspector general of police and a British officer to make an unprejudiced inquiry into the state of affairs in Kashmir.[16] His Highness was markedly reluctant to accept his ministers' advice.[17]

Several investigations of the disturbances were indeed mounted under the auspices of the Kashmir Government. The first was chaired by Sir Barjor Dalal, a retired ICS (Indian Civil Service) officer and chief justice of His Highness' High Court. The Commission was charged only with investigating the July riots in Srinagar and it was fatally flawed from the first by the absence of public members.

Nevertheless, C. Latimer, the resident in Kashmir, was able to write his superior in Simla that the Commission presented a good outline of Muslim grievances and the need for reform in the Kashmir Government. When it came to the Srinagar riot itself: '…no one will be likely to dispute the finding of the commission that in the first instance the Mohammedan were in the wrong and were themselves to blame for the injuries inflicted on them in the vicinity of the Gaol.' The commission was also correct, Latimer continued in excoriating the local authorities for their lack of foresight.[18]

At the same time, *Jathas* from the Punjab increasingly crossed the borders of Kashmir. They were under the leadership, it was asserted, of Mazhar Ali, head of the Majlis-i-Ahrar-Islam-Hind, a political organization founded in the Punjab on the ruins of the Khilafat movement. Its manifesto supported Indian nationalism, secular democracy, representative institutions and communal harmony. This seemingly benign and harmless group was characterized by the Punjab government as the most dangerous body to have taken part in the agitation in that province. This so-called 'Ahrar party' was described as consisting of 'those Muslims who were formerly Congress nationalists but have abandoned nationalism and joint electorates for communalism…'[19]

According to Latimer, the Ahrars tried to induce Kashmiri Muslims to demand a fully responsible government for the state, but this suggestion had not been well-received by those to whom it was addressed. In addition, both Sikhs and Hindus were afraid that concessions granted to the Muslims would work against their interests. Consequently, '…in accordance with the usual practice of "Liberals" in India, they were making use of the extremists Jathas, while disavowing any connection with them…'.[20]

British pressure, the continuation of the Ahrar incursions, and the threat of renewed internal strife, caused the Maharaja on 5 October to

do the following: repeal a tax that was particularly heavy on Muslim nomads; restore to the Muslim community certain religious buildings which were previously seized; appoint another committee to investigate the recent violence; and most significantly, request the temporary placement of a senior British political officer to conduct the investigation of conditions in Kashmir as the government of India had previously recommended.[21]

The Maharaja had for some time been attempting to gain British involvement in the state under the provisions of Article 9 of the Anglo-Kashmir Treaty of 1846, which bound the Raj to protect the Maharaja's territories from outside enemies. But unarmed bands of men acting peacefully, even in protest, did not seem to fit the required specifications of conditions that demanded interference. Besides the British did not wish to alienate the loyal Muslims of the Punjab. Nonetheless, an anti-jatha ordinance was drafted but not enacted until further unrest erupted in Kashmir. This time a fatal clash between Kashmiri state troops and the local populace occurred near Mirpur. The durbar again requested British intervention and this time, the government of India did not believe they could refuse. For the first time in 100 years, troops from British India marched into Kashmir.

The Times of 4 November, reported that the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Brigade occupied Jammu on the previous evening, while the 1st Battalion of the Norfolk Regiment moved from Sialkot to Mirpur. When support sprang up for the Kashmir Muslims in the Punjab, the 2nd Battalion of the Border Regiment was transferred from Rawalpindi to Sialkot.

To calm the rising tide of discontent, the Maharaja finally agreed to support B.J. Glancy, of the Indian Civil Service, a former state finance minister, and the author of the Kashmir Grain Control Scheme, to head a commission to investigate conditions in Kashmir. Freedom of religion was to be the commission's chief concern and four non-officials, two Muslims and two Hindus, were to assist Glancy.[22] Glancy's appointment did not come about easily. A wave of questions on the Kashmir situation swept through both houses of Parliament in London and the Legislative Assembly in Delhi before the Maharaja was convinced that action was necessary.

In conjunction with the appointment of the Glancy Commission, Leonard Middleton, another ICS officer was seconded to Kashmir to investigate the events of September 1931. Yet again his report dutifully provided a chronology of events and concluded that although the state

authorities acted properly, the lack of leadership caused matters to get out of hand. The report appeared on 29 February 1932 and again prompted newspaper comment and questions in Parliament.

The Manchester Guardian of 17 March 1932 remarked that '… it is perfectly obvious that…the huge majority's objection to the despotism of a very small alien minority is the fundamental cause of all the state's troubles in the past eight months…'. From the back benches of the House, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Walter Smiles, obviously a Conservative 'back woodsman' rose to ask the secretary of state for India: '…whether in view of the evidence that the existing discontent in Kashmir is being exploited by Bolshevist agents, the government of India is prepared to take over the administration of this state.' Although the secretary of state replied that he saw no evidence of outside threats to the security of Kashmir, British officers increasingly became involved in the affairs of the State.[23]

In February 1932, Lieutenant Colonel E.J.D. Colvin had been appointed Prime Minister by the Maharaja. L.W. Jardine was deputed to Jammu as civil officer and several British senior military men were assigned to the Kashmir military establishment. As for the British troops in Kashmir, with the exception of one company of the 1st Border Regiment at Mirpur, they had all been withdrawn by the end of the previous year. On 29 January 1932, the Kashmir durbar had again asked for assistance and the 2nd Battalion of the Border Regiment, as well as the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 14th Punjab Regiment had re-entered the state. They stayed until the advent of the hot weather with only one detachment from the Jhelum Garrison remaining in Mirpur until 14 October 1932.[24]

The much awaited Glancy report appeared early in 1932 and recommended among other things: 1) Complete religious freedom and restoration of religious buildings in Kashmir. 2) Increased educational opportunities especially for Muslims. 3) There should be a greater number of Muslim teachers and a special officer to inspect and promote facilities for the education of Muslims. 4) All state posts should be advertised and steps taken to see that all communities received a just proportion of the positions. Local appointments should be made from the local population to the degree possible. 5) *Malikana* (owner's dues) payable to the state should be remitted and the state should transfer ownership of its land, which was occupied and cultivated by local farmers to them. 6) Certain taxes which bore heavily on the cultivators should be eliminated or suspended (for example *Kacharai-*

grazing tax and another impost derived from land newly brought under the plough). 7) Every effort should be made to insure that the existing rights of agriculturists were in no way impaired by rights conferred on other classes. 8) All unauthorized exactions should be halted and authority in the state decentralized. 9) Requisitioned labour should be paid and all recent reforms by the Maharaja should be implemented and respected. 10) Steps should be taken to see that villages gained full benefit from forests concessions, especially in regard to fuel and timber used for building purposes. 11) Unemployment should be combatted and the promotions of industries such as fruit cultivation and textiles should receive the earnest attention of the state authorities.

Immediately after the issuance of the Glancy Commission Report, a conference was convened to deal with the question of a Constitution for Kashmir. This Kashmir Constitutional Reform Conference convened in March 1932 under the presidency of Glancy. The delegates were both official and unofficial representatives of all elements of the Kashmir population, rural and urban, Hindus, Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims, Sikhs and Buddhists. After some disagreement, it was recommended that a legislative assembly be established as soon as practicable, and subject to the final assent of the Maharaja, it should have the power to make laws.

All government bills with the exception of those relating exclusively to reserved subjects, the person or privileges of the Maharaja or members of the ruling family, foreign relations and the discipline and control of the armed forces, were to be referred to the assembly and not become law until ratified by it. However, the power of issuing emergency ordinances and of certifying bills refused by the assembly, was to be vested in the Maharaja. The introduction of private bills was to be under special circumstances and subject to the final assent of the Maharaja before becoming law.

The Maharaja was also to have the power of referring any bill back to the assembly for further consideration and amendment. Questions and resolutions were to be permitted without restriction, provided they did not tread on the sanctity of the reserved subjects, nor affect religious rights, usages, endowments or personal law of any community other than the one to which the questioner belonged, and that they did not relate to the merits of any case under inquiry in a court of law.

Thirty days were recommended as the normal period of notice for questions and the introduction of private bills, while fifteen days were deemed adequate for resolutions. The budget was to be discussed and

no new tax was to be imposed without reference to the assembly. Speeches delivered in the assembly were to be privileged. What was not mentioned was the obvious limitation on the power of the assembly. It was nothing more than an advisory body that could debate but not act.

On the important matter of eligibility for franchise, the Conference suggested that the number of voters on the electoral roll should amount to 10 per cent of the total population; a ratio which, it averred, had frequently been adopted as a working rule in India. To achieve this end, the appointment of a franchise committee was recommended. Qualifications for the franchise committee were to be similar to those operating in British India, except that women would be ineligible for holding office or for voting. In addition, persons under the age of 25 or in government service were denied the franchise.

The Conference went into considerable detail when it came to the vote. It recommended that the same qualification currently in effect for the municipal franchise be used. This involved payment of land revenue of no less than Rs. 20 per annum or possession of immovable property valued at no less than Rs. 1,000, or membership in a learned profession such as medicine of law.

Further means of gaining eligibility included: Receipt of a government pension of not less than Rs. 5 per month, being a jagirdar or pattadar enjoying an assignment of not less than Rs. 50 per annum, or education at the level of standard matriculate or corresponding vernacular standard.

Besides women and persons under the age of 25 or government servants, the Conference suggested that undischarged bankrupts or insolvent, felons, lunatics and those who had not resided in the state for five years, should also be denied franchise.[25]

The Conference in general agreed that separate electorates should be the order of the day. This prompted *The Times* to note that a Conference convened by an Indian ruler, with all Indian representatives except the chairman, had 'reported in favour of those separate electorates which Mr. Gandhi and the Congress Party in British India oppose with such determination.'[26]

The size of the assembly was set at thirty-three, which on a pure population basis meant twenty-four Muslims and seven Hindus, with the Buddhists and Sikhs hardly qualifying for a seat between them. Weightage was consequently implemented to increase the Hindu representation to one-third, resulting in 3 per cent of the seats for the

Sikhs and the Buddhists. The Muslim representation approximated three-fifths of the total membership. The number of nominated members were twenty-two—two-thirds of the elected number—and the Maharaja nominated five ministers as *ex officio* members. The total membership of the assembly was sixty.

No fewer than one-third of the nominated members were to be non-officials but for the rest, the Maharaja was to have total discretion. Although it was anticipated that the nomination would be regulated by the Maharaja so as to provide representation for elements of the population, not specifically provided for in the elected membership. The president of the assembly would be the prime minister. The assembly would meet in two regular sessions—one in the autumn and one in March. Assembly members would be elected for three years in the first instance.[27] On 5 May 1932, Prime Minister E.J.D. Colvin appointed a five member committee under the presidency of Sir Barjor Dalal to deal with the franchise for the proposed Legislative Assembly in detail. The recommendations of the Glancy Commission had done little to calm the unrest in the state. The Sikhs who numbered only 3900, demanded 10 per cent seats in the assembly.[28]

The pandits (Kashmiri Hindus) held a conference from 28 through 31 October and demanded an increase in their existing privileges, including: addition of pandits to the personal staff of the Maharaja; appointment of a pandit minister; higher education loans to pandits by the state; one-third of the state's gazetted appointments to pandits, and the abolishment of the State Agricultural Relief Act, which benefited mainly Muslims. As for the Muslims, a factional conflict erupted in their ranks.[29]

Sheikh Abdullah, for his part, asserted that the Glancy reforms, despite having been accepted by the Maharaja, were not being implemented. Matters now went from bad to worse.[30]

On 6 April 1933, Mirwaiz Yusuf was arrested and in an ensuing tussle, one of his adherents was killed. Although the mirwaiz was released the next day, passions had reached the boiling point.

A scuffle occurred on 26 May during which one of Abdullah's followers was killed. It was charged that it was due to the inflammatory speech given by Abdullah at a funeral in front of a crowd of some 4,000 people. The resident reported:

> From the above, it will be seen, that S.M. Abdullah was using the influential position to which he had undoubtedly attained, to interfere with the legitimate pursuits of the people.[31]

The Kashmir administration now decided to arrest five members of Abdullah's party and three from his rivals. Abdullah was among those apprehended but neither Yusuf nor Hamdani were detained.

The floodgates opened on the night of 31 May; the police suffered forty casualties, and troops of the Kashmir Garrison attacked the dissidents. The resident was critical of this action by the state government. He asserted that Abdullah, who was held in high esteem by the population, should never have been arrested. It was now too late to release him. The resident had never been consulted and a senior British officer was in control of the state troops.[32] Once again, questions were raised in Parliament.[33]

The Times of February 1934 reported rioting between Muslims and Hindus in Srinagar over a camping ground used by Hindus opposite the Anantnag Temple on which the Muslims wished to erect a mosque.

The Report of the Franchise Committee was issued in 1934. It found fault with the concept of an electorate equal to about 10 per cent of the population and noted that only one witness appearing before it had advocated male suffrage, but that all witnesses preferred direct to indirect elections.

The assembly recommended by the Committee was to consist of thirty-three elected members: twenty-one Muslims, ten Hindus and two Sikhs, thirty nominated members and twelve official members, out of which it was recommended that six would be ministers and one an official of Poonch, to be nominated by the ilquadar.

The minimum number of Muslim members suggested for the assembly was thirty-two. The maximum number of Hindus was suggested at twenty-five. Both numbers excluded the official members. No separate representation was recommended for Rajputs, landowners, traders, or labourers. Ordinarily the prime minister should be the president of the assembly, but as he was normally very busy, the minister of justice, or some other appropriate minister would be acceptable.

On the important question of franchise,

> …we may begin by admitting to the franchise all those whose positions are already representatives, and who therefore, may justly represent their fellows at an election. These are Zaildars, Safed-poshes and Lumberdars, who in districts where there are many villages are very numerous. There are also the religious representatives, Imams, Mufties, and Qazis, the Adhisthatas of temples, the Bahis and Granthis of Gurdwars and ordained ministers of the Christian Church.

A second group was to include those who had received titles in Kashmir or British India, as well as pensioners, retired officers and non-commissioned officers, and soldiers of the regular armed forces. Payment of annual land revenue of Rs. 20 or possession of Rs. 600 in immovable property provided eligibility as did an appropriate level of education, or subsequent attainment such as being a lawyer, teacher, or collector. As has been mentioned, more than 10 per cent of the total population was to be enfranchised under this scheme, which in addition to the above would enfranchise women who held a middle school (or equivalent) certificate.

Voters had to be 21 years of age, while candidates for the assembly would have to be over 25 and able to read and write Urdu. A candidate would also have to be registered as an elector and to have lived in the constituency he hoped to represent for at least twelve months. He could not be a former felon or bankrupt.[34]

The resident, in wiring to Delhi, pointed out that the Glancy proposals would have provided a Muslim majority in the assembly of 13 per cent while the current plan would mean a non-Muslim majority of 9 per cent. This fact had not been lost on the Muslim population and at a ministerial meeting held in Jammu on 22 February 1934, the recommendations of the Franchise Committee were accepted with a slight increase in the Muslim representation, leaving a non-Muslim majority of 4 per cent.[35]

In March, L.E. Lang, the resident, was able to report that much of the unrest in the state had subsided. Most of the extremist leaders had either been deported or were in prison. Sheikh Abdullah, who had been out of the state in recent months, had visited him on 20 March and reiterated the major Muslim demand, which was for increased involvement in the affairs of Kashmir. He was highly critical of the Franchise Committee report and averred that the only solution to the problems was a totally responsible assembly.

'Abdullah described the proposals of the Franchise Commission as most detrimental to Muslim interests and not in accordance with the Glancy recommendations…'.

Lang also reported that there had been a change of policy by the Muslim political leadership. In the future, they would stop attacking the Dogra Raj and concentrate their energy on criticizing the British Government. 'The object,' Lang wrote, 'is clearly to enlist the sympathy of the Kashmiri Hindus and Sikhs with a view to exhibiting

a combined front against the Constitution and powers of the new Kashmir Assembly.'[36]

A fully responsible assembly was again to be the goal and civil disobedience was to be the major weapon in the fight to attain it. At a series of meetings, the chairman of the 'Young Muslims' Ghulam Abbas, preached the new gospel. A mock funeral was held for the Constitution and on 2 March Ghulam Abbas, Abdul Majid Qureshi, Ghulam Mohammad Pahalwan, and Sheikh Abdullah were arrested.[37]

Lang was generally optimistic despite the ensuing unrest. He wrote to Glancy who was now in charge of the political department in Delhi:

> … there is no doubt that once the Assembly becomes a "fait accompli", the Muslim leaders will be able to explode themselves there instead of as now, using the Mosques to foment disturbances.[38]

Regulation no. 1 of 1991 (3 April 1934) officially established the new Kashmir State Legislature. The assembly was to consist of the Council (of ministers) and the Assembly. If any doubt remained as to where the power lay, Regulation no. 1 of 1991 removed it. The Council and the Maharaja would dispose while the assembly could only propose.

Schedule 11 attached to the regulation provided details regarding nominated members (now increased to fourteen) of the assembly, from where they should be drawn, as well as who would appoint them, and what their religion was to be (Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or Sikh). The justification for this growth in nominated positions was that nominees would be drawn from constituencies whose geography made elections difficult to conduct. A deposit of Rs.150 was to be required for candidates seeking election to the assembly.[39]

The first election was held on 2 September 1934 and Sir Barjor Dalal, who emerged as president of the state assembly, described the election process. He explained that each constituency would be divided into several polling stations; 138 in all were established for 33 rural constituencies. The coloured box or symbol system was used so that illiterate voters could place their ballots in the receptacle representing their candidate.

Dalal reported that after convening the assembly eventually divided itself into a 'Liberal Group' of some 236 members, a Muslim party of fourteen members, a pandit party of three members, and a Sikh party

of three members. The state counselors and official members formed a separate group.[40]

At first, Sheikh Abdullah seemed relatively satisfied with the state assembly as constituted. According to the resident, Sheikh Abdullah had informed him that he was urging his followers to cooperate with the government and the newly-formed assembly. Together the Sheikh and the resident attended a session of the assembly. They were impressed by the sympathetic attitude of the president of the body and the ministers, who indicated that as long as all reasonable efforts were made to give Muslims a fair share of employment in the state departments, there was no need to fear further disturbance.[41]

Nevertheless, communal and nationalistic agitation continued at a low level. By late 1936, new clouds of discord appeared on the horizon.

N. Gopalaswamy, a devout congressman, was appointed prime minister and Tej Bahadur Sapru became an advisor to the Maharaja. Hari Singh did what he could to fight the mounting unrest.

As the term of the first cohort of 'nominated state councillors' in the legislature was approaching its end, the Maharaja promulgated yet another Constitutional act and proclaimed that in future, seven of the nominated seats would become elective to represent heretofore underrepresented groups—one Tazmi sirdar from each of Jammu and Kashmir, two (one from Jammu and another from Kashmir) drawn from the Jagirdars; Muafirdars and mukarrar-holders with an annual assigned revenue of Rs. 500 or more; two landholders (one from each province) not included in the above categories paying the government land revenue of at least Rs. 250 per annum; and finally a representative from Jammu receiving a pension from the state or from British India of Rs. 100 per month or more. The present nominated holders of the newly-created elective seats were to remain in office until the new order of things could be established.

Future members of what was now to be called the Praja Sabha, were to elect, from among themselves, a deputy chairman of the assembly and to encourage cooperation between the Council of Ministers and the Praja Sabha. Under-secretaries from the Legislature would be assigned to the Council. Although the ability of the assembly to discuss the budget and taxes had increased, the real power still remained with the Council of Ministers.[42]

The British authorities were not overjoyed by the Maharaja's actions. Minutes of 7 March noted:

> It appears that the above was done without consultation with the resident. On the other hand, as the resident remarked, there is nothing likely to embarrass the paramount power in this concession to democratic feeling… It is characteristic of the Maharaja to act without consulting the resident. But this kind of reform seems to serve only to whet the appetite for more.[43]

For the restive members of the legislature, the changes were inadequate. *The Statesman* (Calcutta) of 5 November 1936 reported that the Muslim Conference Party had decided to instruct its members in the assembly not to participate in the budget discussion so that the government would not be able to claim that the budget, which in their view was detrimental to the people, had been sanctioned by the elected representatives in the assembly.

In the past, the party contended that taxation had been too high. The state's money rather than being spent on education and other useful undertakings was squandered on inappropriate schemes.

> The Muslim Party members are of the opinion that the last two and a half years' experience has proved the constitution to be quite hollow, deceptive and harmful instead of being useful to the people who had returned then to the Assembly…

Before further progress could be effected, it became necessary for the Muslim Conference to put its house in order. Conflict with the Ahrars had to be settled and dissent groups, such as the Ahmadiyas, had to be expelled. The success of this endeavour was manifested by the capture of nineteen of the twenty Muslim seats by the Conference in the elections of 1937. Meanwhile Hindu power was split between the Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha of the Kashmiri Pandits and the Hind-Sikh Navjawan Sabha of Jammu. The mid-thirties also saw the rise of student organizations, such as the Kashmir Youth League, the Mazdoor Sabha (workers) and the Kisan Sabha (peasants).

The Muslim Conference now decided that it was time for the next step in the development of Muslim power in Kashmir, which was the demand for the immediate implementation of a responsible government in the state.

5 August 1938 was the second anniversary of Responsible Government Day in Kashmir, and the occasion for a renewed campaign for reform in the staff. On 27 August, Sheikh Abdullah and eleven others including two Hindus and one Sikh signed the so-called 'National Demand.' It was a political document requesting the

implementation of a responsible government 'under the aegis of His Highness, the Maharaja Bahadur,' and it was passed as a formal resolution on 8 January 1939 by the Srinagar Branch of the All India Peoples Conference on Jammu and Kashmir.[44]

The immediate result was the arrest of Abdullah and the other signers of the 'National Demand'. Their imprisonment unleashed a further wave of demonstrations in Srinagar, and on 29 August 1939, the city was placed under Section 144 of the Indian Penal Code.

As time went by, Abdullah came to identify himself more and more with the Indian National Congress. He proposed a change in the name of the Muslim Conference to the National Conference and asked Jawaharlal Nehru to move the alteration at the next meeting of the former.

Abdullah's stance was not universally popular in Kashmir and a power struggle ensued between the new National Conference and the more pro-Jinnah Muslim Conference—those elements of the old conference which had not joined the new incarnation. By the spring of 1939, Abdullah was reported to have made up his differences with his many opponents regarding the change of the Muslim Conference's name but it was clear that many Kashmir Muslims feared Congress's domination. It was reported that Abdullah had invited Gandhi to visit Kashmir.

It was at a Conference, which opened in Srinagar on 9 June 1939, that the Muslim Conference officially changed its name into the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference by a vote of 137 to 3. To emphasize the new organization's non-sectarian stance, several Hindus were included in its ranks. Earlier rumours to the contrary, powerful opposition to the new philosophy continued and Abdullah was forced to constantly defend his position.

The Hindustan Times reported a speech by Sheikh Abdullah, in which he fervently supported the recent alliance of Muslims and Hindus in the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. 'Though the ruling class is Hindu,' he intoned,

> the truth is that the Hindu masses do not share the Privy Purse, nor do they inhabit the Royal Palaces. They live in the same wretched and appalling condition as the Muslim masses and inhabit mud huts, are poverty stricken and in no way profit by the Hindu Raj. We attack the system of administration and not the religion of the present irresponsible government.

That is why the Hindu masses will join our struggle and we have invited them to do so.

Unfortunately for Abdullah, Gandhi was forced to cancel his visit to Kashmir and riots erupted in Srinagar in August. Nonetheless, the first session of the National Conference held in September 1939 passed a strong demand for the implementation of a responsible government in Kashmir.[45]

Meanwhile in March 1940, the Muslim League passed its Pakistan Resolution favouring the establishment of a separate Muslim dominion. The best source of information on the progress of events in Kashmir itself were the fortnightly reports by the resident dispatched to the secretary in the political department of the Viceroy's government (or what turned into the Political Advisor to the Crown Representative).

In late June 1940, the resident, D.M. Fraser, reported that Jawaharlal Nehru and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, (a.k.a. Frontier Gandhi) were in Srinagar. The report for the first half of April 1941, stated that food shortages in Kashmir were being taken advantage of by Sheikh Abdullah. The report for the second half of June, 1941 informed its readers that a controversy erupted over the use of Urdu as opposed to the Hindu script. Legislation had been passed allowing Hindu Rajputs but not Muslim ones to possess guns without licenses on the assumption that the former 'worshipped' their firearms.

Meanwhile the agitation for a responsible government continued and the president of the chamber in the second half of August 1941 reported ten resignations from the Praja Sabha in an attempt to embarrass the government. To support the agitation, *The Hindustan Times* of 17 October 1941 contended that 16 per cent of Kashmir's total income was dedicated to the Maharaja's civil list (essentially his personal expenses). By mid-1942, Colonel L.E. Barton was the resident and Sir Kenneth Fitze had replaced Glancy in Delhi.

Feeling increasingly threatened, the Maharaja on 15 July 1943 followed the suggestion of his close advisor, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, and announced the appointment of a Commission of Inquiry to make recommendations with respect to reforms that should be instituted in the state. The Commission was to be headed by the Chief Justice and president of the Praja Sabha, Rai Bahadur Ganga Nath. The members were to be mainly non-officials drawn from the Praja Sabha and representing both the National and Muslim Conferences. The commission was to report back by the end of July 1944 and the

document was to deal with 'the efficient and progressive character of the administration,' corruption, the increase in Muslim involvement in state affairs, and twenty-one administrative problems, one being medical facilities in rural areas.

The resident reported that the Muslim Conference considered the scheme to be a ruse designed to subvert the Glancy reforms. A member of the working committee of the National Conference wrote to Sheikh Abdullah:

> The appointment of the commission is most inopportune when the All-India Constitution is in the melting pot and the country's leaders are all in gaol. It appears to partake of the nervousness and plans of the Cripps proposals. Those were actuated by the danger of the Japanese invasion of India. This commission originated with the dread of the paramount Power's interference.[46]

In one of several letters to the Viceroy, M.A. Jinnah discounted the value of the reform commission. 'The accounts that I have received,' he wrote,

> lead me to believe that the present situation is intolerable unless some responsible head of the administration takes charge of the affairs of the Kashmir administration. Ill-treatment, oppression and tyranny to Muslims is rampant, and this matter requires your immediate attention…

Jinnah went on to refer to the recent resignation of Sir Maharaja Singh as prime minister of Kashmir after only three months of service. Singh claimed to have been misled at the time of his appointment by persons not in Kashmir.[47]

In autumn, rioting broke out in Jammu ostensibly over the shortage of food and nine Hindus and Muslims were killed. Sir Francis Wylie of the political department in Delhi wrote to Barton:

> … Since this letter was written we had the firing at Jammu about which incidentally the Kashmir Darbar seems a thought over anxious to stage a full dress inquiry. While His Excellency does not at this stage wish to challenge the current theory that this incident had to do primarily with a local shortage of food grains, he takes leave to doubt whether the trouble had to do exclusively with food and feels some uncertainty whether the business was not in some way or another not yet disclosed, connected with the generally unsatisfactory political situation in the State.

The letter continued to conjecture whether it would not be appropriate to have a Muslim prime minister of Kashmir and at the least another Muslim member of the Council.

> ...it may even be the time to insist, once again, on a British officer as prime minister. On the other hand, if a person of the level of Sir B.N. Rao, who it was rumoured might be induced to accept the appointment of prime minister, actually did so, it would go a long way to removing the Viceroy's concerns. At any rate, the Maharaja can no longer be left to his own devices. He should at once appoint a suitable prime minister and make sure that the enquiry commission, the purpose of which is not clear, at least be representative of all elements in the political life of the state.[48]

The Viceroy could not help noticing that while well-known members of the National Conference were on the Commission, there was only a single member of the Muslim Conference.

> From the reports which His Excellency has been receiving from you for some time past, it is clear that the Maharaja's conception of state craft at the present time is to foster the National Conference and by one petty action after another to discourage the Muslim Conference. It is His Excellency's considered view that this is a very dangerous and very unwise way of managing public affairs and this whole aspect of the Kashmir Government's more recent proceedings has in fact His Excellency's strong disapproval.[49]

In his report of the last half of October 1943, Barton discussed the continuing conflict between the Muslim and National Conferences. National Conference members of the Praja Sabha, he reported, had recently walked out after heated words with their rivals over Abdullah's deputy G.M. Sadiq having been ordered to leave the House after refusing to withdraw offensive remarks against the Muslim Conference. To exacerbate the situation further, Mohammad Magbool Sherwani, the leader of the National Conference in Kashmir Province had been sentenced to one year's rigorous imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 100 for having criticized the revenue department of the state.

In November, J.G. Acheson, CIE, ICS, replaced Barton as resident in Kashmir. In his final report, Barton contended that the Muslim Conference was in ascendancy in Jammu, which was 61 per cent Muslim while the National Conference held the lead in Kashmir, which was 93 per cent Muslim.

Sir Gopalaswami Ayangar, who had been prime minister until 1943, was a strong Nationalist and sympathetic to Indian National Congress. His attitude towards the residency stiffened considerably after 1942. He was also friendly with Abdullah. The resignation of Ayangar and the appointment of Sir Maharaja Singh gave hope to the Muslim Conference.

The National Conference in turn tried to influence Rani Amrit Kaur, Singh's sister, to gain his support for the National Conference. However, his resignation in disillusionment after only three months brought the efforts of both parties to nil. Finally, Barton said that he saw no reason for the paramount power to interfere in Kashmir at that time.[50]

Sir Bengal Rao did indeed become prime minister of Kashmir and in early 1944, met Jinnah and Abdullah in Delhi.[51] As a consequence of their conversation, the National Conference decided to join the Muslim Conference in boycotting the Maharaja's reform commission. The ostensible reason was that matters relating to the army and judiciary were deemed to be beyond the commissions' purview and hence the whole undertaking was a farce.[52] The commission was now doomed although it took a few more months for it to officially expire.

Jinnah was apparently invited to visit Kashmir by both parties,[53] and on 9 May 1944 addressed a crowd of 50,000 in Jammu urging Muslim unity. He arrived in Srinagar on the following day. General opinion, the resident reported, was that he would be successful in his mission.[54]

However, unity did not turn out to be the order of the day. Jinnah met with Mountbatten in Bombay in March and returned to Kashmir for a second visit from 17 June through 19 June. When he visited the Muslim Conference, Mohammad Amin Maulvi, the president of the reception committee, declared in his opening address that the Hindus of India were attempting to keep the Muslim community in slavery for which reason the Muslims were determined to achieve Pakistan.[55]

When Ghulam Abbas Chaudhri, the president-elect of the Muslim Conference spoke next, he must have caused Jinnah some concern when he said:

> Although it might be necessary in British India for Hindus and Muslims to combine against a third power, the Muslims of Kashmir state, could not unite with the Hindus. At the same time they did not want Pakistan for the state, but would certainly give Mr. Jinnah every support for his campaign.[56]

Not surprisingly, these sentiments brought Abdullah back into the lists and ended all talk of *rapprochement* between the two Muslim organizations to an end, at least for that time.[57]

At its meeting of 29 and 30 September 1944, the National Conference promulgated its document 'Naya Kashmir' or New Kashmir, which was its view of an economic, social, political, and cultural future of the state.[58] Meanwhile, the Maharaja was finding his position increasing untenable. On 2 October 1944, he invited the Praja Sabha to submit six names, half of whom should be Muslim, from which he would appoint two ministers without portfolio for an experimental period of two years. He guaranteed that one of the ministers would be Muslim.[59]

In November, the resident reported the appointment of the two ministers and the final collapse of the Inquiry Commission. Undeterred, the Maharaja, much to the annoyance of the members of the legislature, appointed yet another commission to plan a budget to cover all state activities for the following five years.[60]

Rao was clearly a stabilizing influence on Kashmir as he was held almost universally in high regard. In mid-1945 he was replaced by Bahadur Ram Chandra Kak, because as the resident reported, the Maharaja felt that Rao had been too partial to the Muslims.[61]

Minutes by E.R. Lumby dated 7 July averred that Chandra Kak had always been the power behind the throne and had constantly interfered with Rao.

> His appointment as Prime Minister is a triumph for the Kashmiri Pandits whose dominance in the State will now be undisputed, and unchecked by an imported Prime Minister. But it will remain to be seen whether they will be able to achieve the satisfaction which the appointment will undoubtedly create among the Muslims by employing their well-worn policy of playing off the two Muslim political parties, one against the other.[62]

When the Maharaja, without consultation, made a ministerial appointment totally counter to the wishes of the National Conference, relations again reached a flashpoint.

Serious trouble erupted in Srinagar at the beginning of August. On 2 August, an authorized procession of the National Conference including Nehru and Ghaffar Khan was met at the riverbank by a counter-demonstration mounted by the Muslim Conference.

A riot ensued during which there were numerous injuries, (including seventeen policemen), fifty arrests and at least one death. Consequently, a local magistrate placed a ban on further processions.[63]

The Hindustan Times of 8 August reported that Nehru had urged the pandits to rally to the National Conference and to demand Responsible Government.

Jinnah was becoming increasingly frustrated. On 22 August, he telegraphed the Viceroy that Chandra Kak was determined to crush the Muslims, and that British intervention was essential in this grave situation.[64]

The Viceroy, General Archibald Wavell was out of town when the letter arrived. When he finally responded to it on 16 September, he tried to reassure Jinnah and suggested that the reports of unrest were exaggerated.[65]

On 20 October, Wavell informed Jinnah that he had just visited Kashmir and had talked with the Maharaja who was 'fully informed' and trying to find a solution to the state's problems, in which quest the Viceroy would assist him.[66]

In 1946, W.F. Webb became the new resident in Kashmir and C.G. Herbert, the secretary in the political department in Delhi. On 17 February, Webb reported Hindu/Muslim clashes in Jammu.[67] Ten days later he asserted that the Muslim Conference was gaining an ascendancy over its rival, and was attempting to undermine Kak whom it believed was favouring the National Conference.[68] However, the National Conference was determined to fight back.[69] The intensity of the discord increased and in May the Viceroy reported that the National Conference had been inciting people to repudiate the state government and to withdraw their allegiance to the Maharaja, whose person and family were being verbally abused.

Sheikh Abdullah developed a new strategy. The 'Quit Kashmir' movement was directed chiefly at the Maharaja, and to a lesser degree also against the British. Abdullah began by asking the British to repudiate the Treaty of Amritsar and the 'sale' of Kashmir to the Dogras. Rioting erupted on 21 and 22 May and one person was killed by police fire. Sheikh Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference were jailed and curfew declared. Nehru denounced the reign of terror and frightfulness in Kashmir and demanded the overthrow of the Kashmir government.[70]

The resident, meanwhile, wrote that Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf, one of the leaders of the Muslim Conference, had declared that

his party was against Kashmir joining Pakistan and only wanted a responsible government under the Maharaja. Thus, the resident thought amalgamation of the two conferences had to all intents and purposes been achieved. Actually, his earlier assessment of the Muslim Conference's strength had been in error. The Conference, driven by internal dissension, had become quite a small factor in the state's politics.

On 19 June 1946, at midday, Jawaharlal Nehru, accompanied by Asaf Ali, Baldev Singh, Tajamal Hussain of the Indian National Army, and several others arrived at the Kashmir border and were refused admission to the state. At 8:30 p.m. surrounded by several hundred followers, they entered anyway and were arrested and subsequently returned to British India, after having been recalled by Indian National Congress. On 30 June, Asaf Ali, who was representing Abdullah, returned to Kashmir with Ghaffar Khan, only to find that Abdullah's trial had been postponed.[71]

Abdullah's trial was finally conducted in August and September 1946 in Srinagar and at the end he was convicted and sentenced to three years imprisonment and a fine of Rs.1500.[72]

Wavell wrote to a colleague (Pethwick-Lawrence):

> ...Nehru has written me saying that the Congress cannot take this lying down. I think Kashmir would be well advised having won their point, to be as accommodating as possible now, but I do not know whether it is feasible to persuade them to take this line... Abdullah's conviction on three counts, prompted the National Conference to resolve on direct action in the struggle against the combined forces of the British and Brahmins.[73]

Despite earlier reports of increased community of interest between the Muslim and National Conferences, the former appeared to be drawing closer to Jinnah. But like its rival, its efforts were hampered by the fact that many of the leaders were in jail and in contrast to the National Conference, it suffered from internal dissension and rivalry between factions headed by Hamidullah and the Mirwaiz.

New elections for the Praja Sabha were held in December 1946. The National Conference boycotted the event, although some of its members ran as independents. Members of the National Conference who were nevertheless elected resigned from their seats. Jinnah advised the Muslim Conference to contest the election and consequently, it ended up with sixteen of the twenty-one Muslim seats in the

Legislature.[74] It was the same type of tactic that Jinnah had used so effectively in British India whereby Muslim League officials remained free while the Congress counterparts languished in jail.

When the assembly reconvened, the Muslim Conference decided not to cooperate with the Kashmir government in the election of 'popular ministers' until the Muslim Conference leaders in jail had been released. Among the prisoners was Ghulam Abbas, the Conference's president. Until he and his colleagues were released, the Muslim Conference was to boycott the Praja Sabha.[75]

Meanwhile, attempts to heal the rift in the ranks failed. The Muslim independent group in the Praja Sabha decided not to join any party. The National Conference declared that 16 March would be 'Quit Kashmir' day.[76]

The following month the resident reported the inauguration of an All Jammu and Kashmir State Peoples Conference, presided over by Ghulam Mustafa Mullick. The Conference consisted largely of disgruntled members of the National Conference who differed with Congress regarding Kashmir's affairs.[77]

The resident went on to report that he heard there were already 250 skeleton branches of the organization in the state and the party was publishing its own weekly, entitled 'Kashmir'.[78] Hand-written minutes probably by L.C.L. Griffin added: 'This marks a rather healthy development.' Further minutes averred that 'Pandit Nehru burnt his fingers in Kashmir rather badly in June 1946. It is hoped that he is not foolish enough to pay another visit.'[79]

However, it was to be a vain hope. In June 1947 Wavell wrote: '…on the subject of the states, Nehru and Gandhi are pathological. Nehru said he must go to Kashmir to get his friend, Sheikh Abdullah … out of prison and to support the Freedom movement in the State.'[80] When Wavell himself visited Kashmir, the Maharaja avoided seeing him, but both he and the prime minister agreed to give 'serious consideration to joining one or the other Constituent Assembly as soon as the picture about Pakistan was a bit clearer'.[81]

On 1 August, Wavell wrote to the secretary of state:

> … ever since I carried out here, Nehru has been hankering after a visit to Kashmir. He is obviously still suffering from an emotional upset consequent upon being recalled by Congress after being arrested in Kashmir, during the time of the Cabinet Mission's meetings last year. In the first instance, I offered to go myself and discuss the future of Kashmir with the Maharajah,

but Nehru was dissatisfied with the result of my visit and asked me to let him go himself. Gandhi came to the rescue and offered to go in Nehru's place... I arranged a meeting between Kak and Gandhi on the 24th of July and warned Kak against dissuading Gandhi from coming to Kashmir, unless they were prepared for Nehru to take his place. Kak failed to take my advice, and succeeded in stopping Gandhi, with the result that the moment Kak had returned to Kashmir, Nehru wrote and said he must now go to Kashmir himself.

Wavell went on to point out to Nehru that it was inappropriate for him to risk arrest in Kashmir when he was to take over the interim government of India in seventeen days. He did not mention the degree to which Hari Singh and Kak despised him. Gandhi again agreed to go. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel felt that neither of them should venture forth but that Gandhi was clearly 'the lesser evil.' Nehru held forth at some length about his mental distress and defended his visit '...on the basis of explaining India's case for the State's accession to India and his own personal need for some relaxation.'

The rest argued in turn with him and finally Gandhi specifically renewed his offer to go provided that Nehru would accept the offer. It was agreed that Gandhi should leave on the following night train via Rawalpindi.

> I can now only hope that his visit will be uneventful. I have reason to believe that when Patel tried to reason with Nehru, the night before our meeting, Nehru broke down and wept, explaining that Kashmir meant more to him at the moment than anything else. Patel found it impossible to deal with him and told a friend after the meeting that I had probably saved Nehru's political career. Thus the chance of Congress making good on the transfer of power.[82]

Gandhi was as good as his word. He travelled to Kashmir and the Viceroy was able to report to London with some relief that he had not been provocative while in Kashmir. '...he has been good enough to give Kashmir (or rather the 'will of the people of Kashmir' as he says) the choice of joining either Dominion'.[83]

After Gandhi's visit, Chandra Kak resigned as prime minister and was replaced by a member of the royal family. More importantly, Abdullah and other National Conference leaders in jail were released from detention.[82]

As the Viceroy put it,

> ...the Maharaja has at last decided to sack his Dewan, Kak,... He now talks of holding a referendum to decide whether to join Pakistan or India, providing that the Boundary Commission give him land communications between Kashmir and India. It appears, therefore, as if this great problem of the States had been satisfactorily solved within the last three weeks of British rule.[83]

Less than two weeks later, the British authorities reported: 'The States Department have concluded a Standstill Agreement with Kashmir but the latter have not yet made any approach to join the Indian Union; nor have the States Department asked the State to accede.[84]

On 8 September, it was reported that Kashmir had concluded Standstill Agreements with both Pakistan and India. '... The Maharaja has not disclosed his hand but has spoken of holding a referendum.'[85]

Reuters India and Pakistan service reported that a provisional Republican Government had been set up in Muzaffarabad in Kashmir. It was headed by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and was believed to be pro-Pakistan. It boldly announced the overthrow of the Maharaja.[86]

This 'government' never came to anything but served as a harbinger of what lay ahead. A tilt towards India was clearly perceived in Karachi and consequently, Pakistan impeded the flow of gasoline and other supplies to Kashmir. On 5 October the United Kingdom High Commissioner in Pakistan telegraphed London:

> The release of Sheikh Abdullah from confinement in Kashmir and his immediate journey to Delhi appear to coincide with the removal of Banbury and Powell from the command of the Kashmir armed forces and police respectively and their replacement by Hindus indicate a clearing of the decks for action as soon as the Maharajah feels that he can rely on the new road from Pathankote for supplies and possible military assistance from India...[87]

The Times of 13 October reported that Justice Mehr Chand Mahajan of the East Punjab High Court, was the new prime minister of Kashmir, replacing General Jammal T. Singh. *The News Chronicle* of 16 October was the first British newspaper to report:

> In Kashmir infiltration by armed Pakistanis from the Punch and Rawalpindi Districts is assuming the dimensions of an invasion. Kashmir State forces are falling back (according to plan) but a clash is inevitable soon.

The following day, as if to provide counterpoint, *The Times* reported:

> Sheikh Abdullah, a Kashmir Muslim Nationalist, arrived at Delhi on Thursday to attend a meeting of the All-India States Peoples Conference, of which he is president, to be held shortly. He was met at the airport by Pandit Nehru, with whom he will stay during his visit.

The Pathan invasion (eventually totalling some 60,000 men) seemed to have proved decisive for the vacillating Maharaja. On 26 October, he wrote to Lord Mountbatten, who had become the last British Viceroy in March 1947.

> Though we have got a standstill agreement with the Pakistan Government, that Government permitted steady and increasing strangulation of supplies, like food, salt and petrol, to my state. Afridis, soldiers in plain clothes, and desperadoes with *modern* weapons, have been allowed to infiltrate the State … The wild forces thus let loose on the State are marching on with the aim of capturing Srinagar … as a first step in over-running the whole state… with the conditions obtaining at present in my State and the great emergency of the situation as it exists, I have no option but to ask for the help of the Indian Dominion. Naturally, they cannot send the help asked for by me without my State acceding to the Dominion of India. I have accordingly decided to do so and I attach the Instrument of Accession for acceptance by your Government. The Maharaja concluded by announcing his immediate intention of setting up an interim Government with Sheikh Abdullah as prime minister.

The last remark was not as simple as it seemed. Abdullah was made head of a newly-formed Emergency Administration, staffed largely by members of the National Conference. But the Maharaja refused to dissolve his Council of Ministers, so that the Emergency Administration which had little power somehow ran parallel to the regular apparatus of government. Be that as it may, the noted historian of India-Pakistan, Alastair Lamb, in his *Birth of a Tragedy, 1947* and *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1946-1990*, denied that the Maharaja ever signed the instrument of accession.[90]

On the following day, Mountbatten wrote to Hari Singh accepting the accession on behalf of his government, but added:

Consistent with their policy that, in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute, the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State. It is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored in Kashmir, and her soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a reference to the people....[91]

In an attempt to prevent escalation, the secretary of state for Commonwealth affairs sent a cipher telegram to Mountbatten:

> ...You must, of course, give serious consideration to an appeal from the Ruler of the State, but I do beg of you not to let your answer to this appeal take the form of armed intervention by the forces of India.
>
> I cannot conceive that, at best, this could result in anything but the gravest aggravation of communal discord not only in Kashmir but elsewhere. Further, it seems unlikely that the Pakistan Government or indeed any government could resist the temptation to intervene with its own forces if you intervene with yours. This could only lead to open military conflict between the forces of the two dominions resulting in incalculable tragedy.

He ended his message by recommending a meeting between Hari Singh, Mountbatten and Liaquat Ali Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan.[92] The telegram was followed by similar ones to the prime ministers of India and Pakistan on the following day.[93]

The High Commissioner in Pakistan dutifully reported the state's reaction to the course of events:

> Kashmir Government's statement in their telegram of 15 October that they might be compelled to ask for "outside assistance", was taken up in a telegram from Mr. Jinnah personally to Maharajah dated October 20th repeat October 20... In this telegram, Mr. Jinnah interprets Kashmir's threat of appeal for outside aid as veiling intention of Maharajah to join Indian Dominion by *coup d'état* by securing India's intervention and assistance.

The high commissioner went on to report that Jinnah had invited the prime minister of Kashmir to Karachi for discussions but no reply was ever received even though the deputy prime minister of Kashmir had been in New Delhi as recently as 25 October.[94]

On 27 October, Mountbatten sent a top secret telegram to London in which he reported progress by the raiders but also indicated no

intention by the government of India to intervene. Still, the situation was very serious and it might be necessary in the future to withdraw all British personnel from both dominions.[95]

Nevertheless, one battalion of Sikhs was flown into Srinagar early on the morning of 27 October. The British government now did its best to keep the Indian intervention to a minimum.[96] In a cipher telegram to the Commonwealth Relations Office, the British High Commissioner in Pakistan reported:

> ...The Secretary General of the Pakistan Cabinet...points out that they have been trying to make contact with Kashmir for the last ten days... The Secretary General informs me that they have no knowledge of numbers of tribesmen involved in present incursion into Kashmir...Pakistan Government attributes this movement to anger aroused among tribesmen by stories of persecution of Muslims in Poonch... He showed me numerous circumstantial reports of the massacre of Muslims in Poonch and also in Jammu by Dogra troops, assisted in Jammu by Sikhs and I.N.A. elements from India. What seems to have happened recently is that Pakistan has been protesting to Kashmir against these incidents, and that Kashmir has been protesting against tribal incursions from Hazara, and that neither side has listened to what the other has to say...

In response to the secretary of state, who had asked how a large body of tribesmen could have proceeded from Pakistan, presumably via Abbottabad, without the Pakistan government taking steps to stop them, the high commissioner repeated:

> I was told that the Pakistan military had advised strongly against any use of force (repeat force) to prevent the passage of these tribesmen ... because this might prove ineffective due to the many different routes into Kashmir and because they had not the resources.
>
> ...In any case, the risk of conflagration on the North West Frontier simply cannot be taken at present... I was assured that all political means...would continue to be taken in order to deter tribesmen from entering Kashmir...but the best way to halt trouble in Kashmir would be for India not to accept the accession of Kashmir. I suppose it is too much to hope that Mr. Nehru would consider making such a declaration...[97]

On 28 October, Nehru telegraphed Clement Attlee:

> ... We decided at first not to send any troops to Kashmir, but to supply arms for which demand had come to us sometime ago. Later developments

made it clear that, unless we sent troops immediately, complete disaster would overtake Kashmir with terrible consequences all over India. Immediate action was necessary to avoid this and save Kashmir.

We therefore, elected to send troops to Kashmir... The sole object of these troops is to defend Srinagar, and to push out raiders who have no right whatsoever to be in Kashmir territory...

Nehru found it impossible to accept the fact that Pakistan had not aided the raiders. Nevertheless, he felt that the accession of a state should be according to the will of its people.

... We had no desire to force any state into accession and, even when Kashmir's Maharaja asked for accession, we hesitated and told him of our policy. Ultimately when this demand was insistently made on us, and was supported by responsible elements, we replied that in the peculiar circumstances, we were prepared to accept the accession, but it was clearly understood that final decision could only be taken in accordance with the wishes of the people, to be ascertained as soon as law and order was established...

Finally he added, 'We are always ready to discuss any issue in dispute with representatives of Pakistan...'.[98] Attlee urged both Jinnah and Nehru to attend a special conference on Kashmir.[99]

Compromise was in the air and the High Commissioner in India informed London that Mountbatten, Nehru and V.P. Menon, secretary to the Commission charged with the integration of the Indian states were flying to Karachi the next day to confer with their counterparts about Kashmir.[100]

In another telegram of the same day (Top Secret telegram no. 1115) he informed London that:

Gracey, officiating C-in-C Pakistan Army, reported by phone to me 0100 hours, night of 27th October, that he had received orders from Jinnah, ... which he had not, repeat not, obeyed ... to send troops into Kashmir to seize Baramula and Srinagar also Banihal Pass and to send troops into Mirpur District of Jammu...

The high commissioner flew to Lahore and met with Jinnah pointing out the 'incalculable consequences of military violation of what is now territory of Indian Union in consequence of Kashmir's sudden accession.'

Jinnah withdrew his orders but was very angry and disturbed by what he considered sharp practice by India in securing Kashmir's accession. The situation remained explosive and highly dangerous. In the course of this conversation, Jinnah agreed that he and Liaquat Ali Khan would meet with Mountbatten, Nehru and the Maharaja of Kashmir in order to find a solution to the Kashmir problem.

Attlee, although assuming the role of peace-maker, was annoyed with both parties—with Jinnah for having probably countenanced the Pathan invasion of Kashmir, and with Nehru for being:

> needlessly provocative in (a) choosing Sikh troops to send, (b) accepting accession to India, even if only provisionally, which was obviously an unnecessary step at this stage, (c) "welcoming" a Congress-minded Prime Minister for Kashmir.[101]

On the afternoon of 29 October, the British high commissioner in Delhi, now the equivalent of a British ambassador to an independent state, had a long talk with V.P. Menon about Kashmir. Most of what Menon had to say was already familiar rhetoric, i.e. that Pakistan fomented the Pathan invasion, and that Srinagar would have fallen had India not intervened.

In addition, Menon referred to a very real danger of Russian infiltration through Gilgit. In this connection it was important to bear in mind that the Muslim inhabitants of the Kashmir province with its long, international frontier, were 'have nots' to a man and would thus be easy and immediate prey to Communist propaganda if an orderly government were replaced by tribal rule.

The next step would be India itself, which faced many difficulties and, until conditions improved, might well prove to be fertile ground for Communist propaganda. Menon said that he and Mountbatten had urged the acceptance of Hari Singh's accession to India as one requirement for military intervention, but that Pandit Nehru on the other hand was in favour of immediate help without reference to the question of accession. Menon and Mountbatten, however, carried the day.

Menon then referred to the scheduled meeting of the Indian and Pakistani leaders the following day (29 October) at Lahore. Menon reflecting the opinion of his superior, Patel, averred that 'there was no basis for discussion with Pakistan regarding the future of Kashmir, until the raiders had been driven out of the State. The Pakistan

Government could assist in this and it would be necessary for the Government to take adequate measures to prevent further incursions.' (Marginal minutes noted 'These conditions are probably impossible to fulfil and are meant to be so.')

'Thereafter,' Menon continued, 'one possible solution was for the establishment of Kashmir as an independent state.' This last subject referred to joint dominion control of the external affairs and defence, and a standstill agreement with each dominion on communications.

When the high commissioner asked if such a solution was possible in 'measurable time,' Menon thought it 'unlikely'. He also indicated that any idea of a referendum was out of the question…'

Finally, he thought that Jinnah was disinclined to seriously risk a war over Kashmir. The high commissioner concluded:

> In the light of present developments and my talk with Menon, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that for sometime both Dominions have been jockeying for a position in which with some measure of legal pretext, they could acquire domination over the State of Kashmir.[102]

Still, on 29 October, Attlee went to the Commonwealth Relations Office and stated that,

> The account of a planned *coup d'état* by Jinnah sounds to me like wild exaggeration.
>
> If it is true that Mountbatten favoured acceptance of the provisional accession of Kashmir to India, as Menon states, I think it is a matter for regret. The acceptance of Kashmir's accession, against Nehru's desire, was to my mind an unnecessary and provocative step.[103]

In the same missive, the prime minister expressed regret that the proposed meeting scheduled for Lahore that day between the two governor generals and two prime ministers had to be postponed and he expressed hope for its rapid rescheduling. The supposed reason for cancellation was Nehru's illness.

In a telegram to Nehru on the same date, Attlee reiterated his opinion and stated:

> I and my Government cannot help but feel deeply concerned at the strain which these developments are placing on relations between India and Pakistan. We are sincerely anxious, lest Kashmir should prove to be the cause of a break between the two Dominion Governments. I confess there

> still seems to be to be considerable danger of this, unless there are early talks at the highest level in order to concert plans; both for the restoration of order in Kashmir, and for the final solution of the problems of its ultimate relationship to Pakistan and India, including the vexed question of how to ascertain the will of the people in a State like Kashmir.[104]

As was so often the case, the high commissioners of both India and Pakistan tended to support the views of the governments to which they were deputed. Sir L. Grafftey-Smith, in Pakistan, telegraphed the Commonwealth Relations Office, reflecting the Pakistan government's view of the situation—a message which had much of his own opinion in it.

> …It was all Mr. Jinnah could do to prevent the tribes from moving in on the Punjab situation. Kashmir allied to India may well start off a "Jehad" on the Frontier….[105]

Minutes noted:

> This is the first time which I have seen it stated that Mr. Jinnah prevented the tribes from moving in on the Punjab situation. But Sir Grafftey-Smith states the fact categorically in this telegram and there is no reason to question it…[106]

The high commissioner in India (Symonds) supported Indian claims to mount proof of Pakistan support for the Pathan invaders by reporting to London:

> I saw Iyengar, Private Secretary to Prime Minister this morning, who told me "off the record" that, according to their latest information, the Indian troops which had gone out to meet the raiders at Baramulla had been met with strong artillery fire. This was the first indication that the raiders were in possession of artillery.[107]

The records indicate a 'draft A' of a telegram of 30 October from Attlee to Nehru. Although what it has to say is of interest, there is no evidence that it was ever sent. It asks Nehru to withdraw all Indian troops from Kashmir as and when the tribesmen withdraw. It also asks for the removal of Kashmir State Forces from Poonch and other areas where they had been in conflict with Kashmir Muslims. Perhaps most significantly, it asks for the holding of a plebiscite with neutral observers as soon as practicable. In the meantime it was recommended,

the Indian government should re-affirm that their acceptance of provisional accession was not intended to prejudice the ultimate decision. Attlee concluded by stating that he was making these same suggestions to the prime minister of Pakistan.[108]

As already noted Abdullah visited Delhi on 29 October. The British High Commissioner in Delhi, in a telegram to London on 30 October, reported that:

> Menon told me this evening the proposal to hold special conference about Kashmir had been dropped, but that Indian side will be prepared to discuss questions at meeting of Joint Defense Council to be held at Lahore on the 1st of November. Governor General and Prime Minister will go to Lahore…[109]

Still on 30 October, the high commissioner in India reported a further conversation with V.P. Menon.

> Mr. Menon told him that even if Nehru had not been indisposed, the Lahore conference, scheduled for Tuesday, could not have taken place because ministers ultimately decided they should not be rushed with only 24 hours notice to a meeting with the Pakistan authorities on their own ground.
>
> Menon went on to refer to the exchange of telegrams between Pandit Nehru and Mr Attlee. Menon said Mr Attlee's latest message had invoked strong criticism and resentment from ministers, particularly as regards paragraph 2 which was interpreted to mean that Her Majesty's government not only did not approve of the action taken by the Indian government, but also failed to recognize or understand the reasons for it. Nothing would budge Menon on this issue. He said that the prime minister, the deputy prime minister, the private secretary to the prime minister and he himself could give no other interpretation to this paragraph. He said that India felt that Her Majesty's Government did not appreciate the difficult position into which the nation had been thrust.
>
> The governor general had been consulted at every juncture. Either India had intervened or the raiders would have succeeded with the attendant danger of Pakistan recognizing the resulting government. He reiterated that there was no way the raiders could have entered Kashmir without Pakistan's connivance.

> But Menon had changed his view about a plebiscite. Today he said that a plebiscite would, of course, be held when proper arrangements could be made, though his enthusiasm for this method of reaching a final decision was cooler than it had been before present Kashmir troubles had begun.[110]

On 31 October, the high commissioner again telegraphed the Commonwealth Relations Office indicating once more the degree to which a high commissioner could identify with the government to which he was deputed. Symonds in India told London that he did not see how India could have acted differently than it did.

Now that Attlee has offended Delhi, the high commissioner suggested sending a message to Pakistan saying, among other things,

> I feel it only right to tell you now that there are reports in this country that this aggression was arranged by the Pakistan Government. We do not believe that for a moment, but it is difficult to see how the Pakistan Government could have been unaware of the movement of such a considerable body of tribesmen in motor transport across Pakistan territory. In any case, it seems to us that since the Pakistan Government are in a position to control lines of communication of the tribesmen, it would be a very simple matter for them to put an immediate end to the fighting. In fact, I should be lacking in frankness if I did not tell you that public opinion here will regard continuation of this incursion by tribesmen as attributable either to the deliberate purpose of the Pakistan government or at the least, to its negligence....[111]

Later in the day, Grafftey-Smith, the high commissioner in Karachi, telegraphed London informing the Commonwealth Relations Office that:

> Jinnah refuses to come to Delhi. He has not told this to his ministers, as it would put a definite end to any possibility of Nehru going to Lahore when he recovered.[112]

Reuters reported a speech by Jinnah on 30 October in which he declared:

> We have been victims of a deep-laid and well-planned plot executed with utter disregard for the elementary principles of honesty, chivalry and honour.[113]

In a 'most immediate' telegram to the high commissioner in Delhi, Patrick Gordon Walker, the secretary of state of the Commonwealth

Relations Office, agreed that Jinnah had been 'feeble and unwise in acquiescing or tolerating the activities of tribesmen,' but he could not agree that Jinnah had planned or designed the incursion. Although he was sympathetic to India's action, he considered the acceptance of accession both a mistake and unnecessary. In conclusion, it was impossible for Attlee to send the suggested message to Nehru. One thing was clear which was that further discussions were of vital importance.[114]

The actual telegram that Attlee sent to Liaquat Ali Khan on 31 October was not at all what the high commissioner had proposed. He limited himself to hoping that the meeting scheduled for Lahore the coming Saturday would be successful and that the recent course of events in Kashmir would not prejudice the outcome. If a positive result came from the conversations,

> I trust that you and the Governor General will be willing to use all your great influence to make it plain that it cannot be in the Muslim interests that the present situation should be allowed to continue....[115]

Liaquat's reply was not encouraging. 'It is clear to the Government of Pakistan,' he telegraphed Attlee,

> that the Pathan raid was provoked by the use of Kashmir troops to attack and kill Muslims in Kashmir and Jammu, and for this the policy of the Kashmir Government was solely responsible. The Kashmir Government have been fully aware of the inevitability of the Pathan incursion. Their deliberate refusal to consider suggestion of the Pakistan Government for a meeting of representatives of both to handle the situation jointly and in friendly cooperation, and at the same time their conspiring with the Indian Government enabled them to use this raid as the occasion for the putting into effect the pre-planned scheme for the cession of Kashmir as a *coup d'état* and for the occupation of Kashmir by Indian troops with the object of holding down the people of Kashmir ... In the opinion of the Government of Pakistan, the accession of Kashmir is based on fraud and violence, and as such cannot be recognized....[116]

An appreciation of the situation by the Commonwealth Relations Office was distinctly anti-Indian.

> It would have been natural for Kashmir eventually to have acceded to Pakistan on agreed terms, in view of: (a) The predominantly Muslim population, her lack of proper communications with the outside world

except through Pakistan, and her dependence on Pakistan for continued implementation of the 1870 Customs Agreement from which she obtained a substantial proportion of her revenue.

(b) The Kashmir Government's failure to pursue the proposal for discussion with the Government of Pakistan of the question of supplies and attacks made by State troops on Muslim villages suggests that the Maharajah's advisors may have valued their differences with Pakistan as providing as excuse for Kashmir's eventual accession to India.

(c) There is no evidence for the Government of India's allegation that the Pakistan Government organized the incursion of the tribesmen. Indeed, it is clear from Karachi telegram No. 165 that they brought strong political pressure on the tribes not to enter Kashmir. Sikh slaughter of Muslims in the East Punjab and Delhi, inevitably excited the tribes and the attacks by Kashmir State Troops on Muslim Villages gave them specific direction for their outbreak…

The Commonwealth Relations Office appreciated the strength of the government of India's case for sending troops to Srinagar.

> Nevertheless, the Government made provocative mistakes: (1) in accepting even provisionally the accession of Kashmir…, (2) in not consulting with the Government of Pakistan, (3) in sending Sikh troops…
>
> All this suggests that the only object of the government of India was to secure Kashmir's accession to India.[117] It is not surprising that the government of India became deeply incensed when it became cognizant of the sentiments of His Majesty's government.[118]

In a broadcast on 2 November, Nehru promised the withdrawal of Indian troops from Kashmir as soon as order was restored. He also committed himself to a referendum as soon as the situation was stabilized. 'We, for our part', he said, 'have no intention of using our troops in Kashmir when the danger of invasion has passed.'[119]

Mountbatten attended the Joint Defence Council meeting in Lahore alone. While there, he talked to Jinnah. However, events had reached a point where it was never possible for the leaders of the two nations to meet amicably, in conference, regarding Kashmir.

On 6 November, the British government protested India's accusation of being pro-Pakistani. Back-pedalling hurriedly, it averred that there was a lot of difference between the views ascribed to Nehru by Pakistan and actuality.

> Nehru's offer that a reference to the people of Kashmir should be conducted under international auspices seems to us convincing proof that at all events, his intentions are not the kind attributed to him by the Pakistan Government.[120]

Owing to a suggestion by the Delhi high commissioner, London had concluded that partition might be the only solution for the Kashmir imbroglio.[121]

The following day, the situation was exacerbated by a singularly bellicose broadcast delivered by Liaquat Ali Khan, the prime minister of Pakistan. He referred to 'brutal deeds committed by the Dogras on Kashmir Muslims.' He wondered how one could characterize a rebellion of the enslaved people of the world as an invasion from outside.

> If the plans of their enemies succeed, they will be exterminated as Muslims in various other parts of India have been exterminated. It is presumably after such extermination the Government of India propose that a Referendum be held....[122]

In a cipher telegram to Attlee, Liaquat expressed himself in the same vein: 'I must warn you,' he cabled,

> that India's consistent evasion of effective contact and discussion with Pakistan on Kashmir issue, following no less consistent evasion of such issues by Kashmir Government and Maharajah, their accession to India has produced here a feeling of bitterness and intense frustration, in which only counsels of despair make sense....[123]

On 1 November, in Lahore, Jinnah outlined his terms for a settlement of the Kashmir question to Mountbatten: (1) An immediate ceasefire to be ordered by both governor generals. If the tribes did not obey, they would be attacked by the forces of both dominions. (2) Simultaneous and prompt withdrawal of Indian and tribal forces. The two governor generals would have full power to restore peace, undertake the administration of the state and arrange a prompt plebiscite under their joint supervision.[124]

On 2 November, Nehru made a counter-proposal: (1) The Pakistan government was to call off the tribesmen. (2) The Indian forces would withdraw as soon as law, order and peace had been restored. (3) The two governments would ask the United Nations to sponsor a plebiscite.[125]

On 10 November, news broke of the most hopeful development to date—the high commissioner in Delhi, Mohammed Ali Jinnah of Pakistan, and V.P. Menon met in the presence of Lord Ismay, Mountbatten's Chief of Staff, and concluded a draft agreement on Kashmir that was acceptable to both sides.

> Both governments agree that all forces whether regular or irregular must be withdrawn from Kashmir soil at the earliest possible moment. The withdrawal will commence on the 12th of November and will be concluded by November 26th. The Government of Pakistan solemnly pledge themselves to do their utmost to assure that the tribesmen are withdrawn according to this programme and that they make no further incursions. The Government of India for their part undertakes to withdraw their forces according to programme.

The high commissioner reported that Jinnah was certain that Pakistan would be victorious in any plebiscite. More surprisingly:

> Menon said that he entirely agreed that Kashmir would go to Pakistan but emphasized that in view of what had passed, a formal plebiscite was essential.
>
> It was agreed that:
>
> A plebiscite will be held as soon as possible under the aegis of two persons nominated by the Government of India and Pakistan with a person nominated by the Kashmir Government as observer. The plebiscite will be conducted by a British officer.[126]

From this point forward the situation was destined to deteriorate. On 10 November, the high commissioner in Delhi reported that Nehru, who was after all of Kashmir Pandit ancestry, had made an emotion-filled visit to Kashmir during the course of which Sheikh Abdullah supposedly said the people of Kashmir 'may not bother about a referendum.' *The Statesman* reported Nehru as saying, 'As in the past, so in the future. We (India and Kashmir) shall stand together and face every enemy. This is the pledge I give here today to your leader Sheikh Abdullah.'[127]

On 19 November, the high commissioner in India, Symonds, informed London about growing Indian confidence and intransigence: 'Nehru made it clear,' he wrote,

> that whereas a meeting was desirable (with his Pakistani counterpart) in principle there was no hurry. In fact, the impression left on Ismay was that Nehru thought things were going so well in Kashmir that the longer discussion with Liaquat was deferred the stronger would be India's position....[128]

In the midst of increased wrangling concerning the details of a possible plebiscite, a ministerial level meeting was finally held in Delhi at the beginning of December. High Commissioner Symonds telegraphed the Commonwealth Relations Office:

> the hope of getting an agreement on Kashmir between the two dominions has decreased very considerably during the last three days. The two lots of Ministers, once they parted physically from their meetings in Delhi, also parted mentally. Patel hears stories of raid atrocities while visiting Jammu with Baldev Singh. Liaquat heard the counter while in Sialkot and Rawalpindi. Liaquat met with Azad Kashmir leaders while in Rawalpindi and they condemned the draft agreement which Liaquat favoured out of hand. Symonds concluded by observing that Patel and Singh were 'embittered and infuriated'.[129]

In early December, India and Pakistan, with both prime ministers present, met twice at the Defence Council meeting in Delhi and Lahore. But the old issues and disagreements had not changed, and the two parties remained far from any agreement.

Hopes for settlement now became increasingly distant as disagreement grew concerning the prerequisites for any plebiscite—whose troops (or raiders) should be removed and when; demands by Pakistan that Abdullah's government be replaced by an 'impartial' one; who was to administer the plebiscite? Early in 1948, the Security Council refused to accept the Indian case on Kashmir, much to the annoyance of Mountbatten and Nehru. Both Attlee and Gordon-Walker tried to mid-wife an agreement by attempting to arrange a meeting between Nehru and Liaquat during a recess in the Security Council hearings, but to no avail.

Gordon-Walker then travelled to Delhi in the third week of February to meet with Nehru and Abdullah. Nehru said he was prepared to meet again with Liaquat but held little enthusiasm for the prospect. He was adamant about keeping Abdullah's government in place in Kashmir. Abdullah suddenly suggested that Kashmir might accede jointly to

both Dominions. Gordon-Walker next flew to Pakistan to see Liaquat and Jinnah, but with little effect.[130]

The year 1948 was an eventful year. In Kashmir itself, Hari Singh was finally convinced by the government of India to alleviate the confusion created by the existence of both a Council of Ministers and an Emergency Administration. On 5 March, the Maharajah issued a proclamation in which he reconstituted the Council of Ministers, with Sheikh Abdullah at its head as prime minister, charged with the administration of the state. In addition, His Highness committed himself to the convening of a National Assembly as soon as 'peace and normalcy were restored.'[131]

However, this happy state of affairs never progressed. Instead, incessant hostilities became the order of the day. Kashmir today vies with the Middle East and Ireland as the locus of neverending turmoil.

Wretched Kashmir! Throughout its history as a princely state, a foil for British imperial foreign policy; alternately forced to absorb the anarchical-tribal lands of the north-west and then to disgorge them; its internal affairs increasingly the object of British attention, but never to a degree sufficient to protect a largely Muslim population from the exactions of a prolifigate Hindu ruling house.

With a little luck, it could have all been different. In 1947, the state might have had the good grace to collapse, to dissolve into its constituent parts or to divest itself of its ruling family. To take conjecture of a few more steps into what could have been, let us stray for a moment into the world of the counter-factual.

The British ally against the Sikhs turns out to be the Khan of Bahawalpur. He is rewarded for his efforts, much as Gulab Singh actually was, by being created ruler of Kashmir and its adjoining territories. We would then have had a Muslim majority state ruled over by a Muslim prince.

Nehru is not of Kashmiri Pandit stock and hence has no strong emotional ties to the region. Instead, given his unassailable liberal political credentials, he convinces Hari Singh that as the ruler of a Muslim state, he has to opt for Pakistan.

After all the era of the princely states was over, ordinarily, Nehru would have insisted on the proposed plebiscite. Another scenario would have the invading Pathan irregulars capturing Srinagar Airport, just as Indian planes appeared on the horizon. The Sikh Battalions would have been unable to land, and Kashmir would have fallen to Pakistan. The consequent humiliating wounds would have healed quickly and

the course of contemporary South Asian history would have turned out to be quite different.

NOTES

All records referred to in this Chapter are from the Archives of the India Office Library, London, England. The India Office Library has in recent years undertaken a massive reorganization of its records in the form of re-categorization and consolidation (see Martin Moir, *A General Guide To The India Office Records*, The British Library, 1988, xvi + 331). The footnotes to the last chapter of this book reflect some of these changes. The earlier chapters are based on things as they were before the re-organization. Referring to the list that follows, the reader can determine where footnotes using the previous system now fall.

E	East India Company, General Correspondence, 1602-1859
E/1	Home Correspondence, 1699-1859
E/2	Correspondence with the Board of Control, 1784-1858
E/4	Correspondence with India, 1703-1858.
F	Board of Control, General Records, 1784-1858.
F/1	Minutes, 1785-1858
F/2	Home Correspondence, 1784-1858.
H	Home Miscellaneous Series
L	Departmental Records
L/P&J	Public & Judicial Records, 1795-1950 = 21,600 vols./files + 224 boxes
L/P&S	Political & Secret Dept. Records, 1756-1850 =13246 vols/files+318 boxes
L/P&S/3	Home Correspondence, 1807-1911 (469 volumes, 23 boxes)
L/P&S/5&6	Political Correspondence with India, 1792-1874 (761 volumes)
L/P&S/10	Departmental Papers, Political & Secret Separate (or Subject) Files, 1902-1931 (1,315 volumes)
L/P&S/11	Departmental Papers: Political & Secret Annual Files, 1912-1930 (309 volumes)
L/P&S/12	Departmental Papers (Political) External Files & Collections circa 1931-1950 (approx. 4800 files/volumes)
L/P&S/13	Departmental Papers; Political Internal/Indian States Files & Collections, circa 1931-1950 (approx. 19520 files/volumes)
L/P&S/18	Political & Secret Memoranda, circa 1840-1947 (about 1230 items bound or in folios including Indian States)
L/P&S/19	Political & Secret Miscellaneous Records, circa 1750-1947 (approx. 900 volumes/files and boxes)
P	Proceedings & Consultations of the Government of India and of the Presidencies and Provinces, 1702-1945 (approx. 46,500 volumes)

R	Records transferred later through official channels
R/1	India: Crown Representatives' political Dept. Records, 1880-1947 (about 7,257 files, volumes and boxes, Paramountcy and States, etc.)
R/1/3	Frontiers Branch, 1910 (1 file)
R/2	India, Crown Representatives Residency Records, circa 1789-1947, approx. 1370 boxes 271 volumes
R2	Kashmir Residency, circa 1869-1947 (26 boxes)

A BRIEF NOTE ON SOURCES

This book is almost entirely based on archival source materials. When published books or other secondary materials are used, they are referred to in the notes following individual chapters. No comprehensive, all-inclusive bibliography on the period covered by the book has been provided.

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INDEX

A

Abbas, Chaudhry Ghulam, 148, 159, 161
Abbott, Captain James, 14
Abdullah, Munshi Shihab-ud-Din, 138
Abdullah, Sheikh Mohammad, 137, 138, 139, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 169, 174, 175, 176
Abdullah's Reading Room party, 138
Abdur Rahman, 45, 63
Acheson, J.G., 154
Afghan hegemony, 1
Afghanistan, 36, 40, 41, 42, 51, 52, 53, 54, 63, 65, 70, 88, 89, 92, 93, 108, 109, 132
Agnew, Mr P. Vans, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20
Agriculturists' Relief Regulation, 136
Ahmadiyas, 150
Ahrar: incursions, 140; party, 140, 150
Aitchison, C.U., 39, 46, 47
All India Peoples Conference, 151
All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, 151
All Jammu and Kashmir State Peoples Conference, 159
All-India Constitution, 153
All-India Kashmir Muslim Conference, 137, 138
All-India States Peoples Conference, 162
Aman, Gauhar, 21
Aman-ul-Mulk, 38, 40, 51, 63, 83, 94, 123
Amir-ul-Mulk, 109, 110
Anant Ram, Diwan, 67
Anglo-Kashmir Treaty, 141
Anglo-Sikh Wars, 33
Anjuman-i-Nusrat-ul-Islam, 133
Anti-jatha ordinance, 141
Ardagh, Sir John, 74
Argyll, Lord, 37, 39, 40, 41, 48, 61
Arya Kumar Sabha, 133, 134
Arya Samaj, 133
Asaf Ali, 158
Asahi, Ghulam Ahmed, 138
Asquith, Herbert, 128
Atalik Ghazi, 45, 47
Attlee, Clement, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 173, 175
Auckland, Lord, 1
Ayangar, Sir Gopalaswami, 155
Aylmer, Captain, 99
Aylmer, Major, 123

B

Badcock, Lieutenant, 99
Balfour, Arthur, 124
Banbury, 161
Bannerji, Sir Albion, 137
Barr, Lieutenant Colonel D.W.K., 75
Barton, Colonel L.E., 152, 154, 155
Beg, Yakub, 42, 43, 44, 45
Benyon, Lieutenant William, 113
Bethune, 113
Bhag Ram, Rai Bahadur Pandit, 72
Bhopawar Agency, 74
Bhownaggree, M.M., 125
Biddulph, Captain John, 51, 89
Blood, Brigadier Bindon, 112
Boisragon, Lieutenant G.H., 99
Bolshevist agents, 142
Borradaile, Captain H.B., 113
Bose, Jogendra Chandra, 68
Boundary Commission, 161
Brackenbury, General, 118
Bradlaugh, Charles, 77
Bradshaw, Captain L.J.E., 99
Broadfoot, Major, 4

Broome, Captain Arthur, 7, 22
Bux, Sheikh Mian, 70

C

Cabinet Mission, 159
Cayley, Dr Henry, 44, 46, 50
Chamberlain, Lieutenant Colonel Neville, 73
Chang Hung Tao, General, 104
Chelmsford, Lord, 135
Chitral fort, 110
Clarendon, Lord, 40
Clerk, Sir George, 23, 48
Cobbe, 113
Colvin, Lieutenant Colonel E.J.D., 142
Colvin, Prime Minister E.J.D., 145
Commission of Inquiry, 152
Commonwealth Relations Office, 170, 171
Commonwealth, 163
Congress Party, 144
Cooke, 113
Cranbrook, Lord, 52, 60
Cripps proposals, 153
Cross, Lord, 69, 77, 84
Crosthwaite, Sir Charles, 118
Cunningham, Captain A., 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 25
Cunningham, W.J., 91
Currie, Sir Frederick, 11, 12, 19, 23, 48
Curzon, George N., 126, 132
Curzon's partition of Bengal, 133

D

Dalal, Sir Barjor, 140, 145, 148
Dalhousie, Lord, 22, 24
Dane, Sir Louis, 133
Davis, Sir John, 16
Davis, Sir Robert, 48
Davison, Lieutenant, 91, 92, 93, 108
De Giers, 108
Dedo, Mian, 2
Dharma Sabha, 133
Dhrou Deu, 2
Dogra, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 14, 21, 137, 157; brothers, 3;dominions, 13; family, 2; force, 7, 51; government, 138; kingdom, 46; Rajput, 137; rule, 19, 26, 49, 138; Sabha, 133; state, 4
Dufferin, Lord, 63, 65, 68, 69
Durand, Captain Algernon, 66, 67, 70, 72, 82, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101
Durand, Sir Mortimer, 65, 76, 94

E

Earl of Mayo, 37
East India Company, 1, 3, 9, 12, 13, 20, 21, 27
Edwardes, Lieutenant Herbert, 10
Elgin, Lord, 109, 117, 119, 120, 121, 122, 126, 127, 128, 129
Elliott, H.M., 25
Emergency Administration, 162, 176

F

Fateh Kadal Reading Room, 137
First Afghan War of 1839–42, 33
First World War, 134
Fitze, Sir Kenneth, 152
Forsyth, Douglas, 40, 44, 45, 50
Fowler, Sir Henry, 118, 119, 121, 124
Franchise Committee, 146, 147
Franco-Prussian War, 59
Fraser, D.M., 152
Frere, Sir B., 47

G

Gandhi, 144, 151, 152, 159, 160
Ganga Nath, Rai Bahadur, 152
Gatacre, 112
Ghazanfur, 19
Giers, H.K. de, 108
Gladstone, 53
Glancy, B.J., 141, 148, 152; Commission Report, 143; Commission, 141, 145; proposals, 147; recommendations, 147; reforms, 145, 153; report, 142
Gobind Sahai, Diwan, 67
Godley, Sir Arthur, 119
Gopalaswamy, N., 149

Gorchakov, Prince, 35, 36, 40
Gordon-Walker, Patrick, 170, 175, 176
Gorton, Lieutenant R. St. G., 99
Grafftey-Smith, Sir L., 168, 170
Green, Sir Henry, 34
Grey, Captain H., 44
Griffin, Sir Lepel, 77
Gromchevsky, Captain, 66, 86, 87, 102
Gurdon, Lieutenant, 110
Gurkhas, 137

H

Hamadini, Mirwaiz, 138
Hamilton, Lord George, 117, 120, 121, 126, 127, 129
Hardinge, Lord, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 23, 26
Harley, Lieutenant H.K., 110, 114, 115
Harrison, Frederick, 129
Hartington, Lord, 54
Hayward, Captain G.W., 39, 40, 48
Herbert, C.G., 157
Hind-Sikh Navjawan Sabha, 150
Hindu: Kashmir, 1; Pandits, 137; Rajputs, 137, 152
Hindu/Muslim clashes, 157
Hindustan Times, 151
Hobhouse, Sir John, 2, 21, 24
Hussain, Tajamal, 158

I

Imamuddin, Sheikh, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 22
Indian National Congress, 133, 155, 158
Islamabad, 139
Ismay, Lord, 174, 175
Iyengar, 168

J

Jacob, General John, 34
Jammu Muslims, 138
Jammu, 2, 3, 9, 10, 13, 14, 22, 33, 74, 96, 138, 141, 142, 147, 149, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 165, 171
Jardine, L.W., 142
Jathas, 140
Jinnah, Mohammed Ali, 151, 153, 155, 157, 158, 159, 163, 165, 166, 167, 168, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 176

K

K'e-ying, 16, 18
Kak, Bahadur Ram Chandra, 156
Kak, Chandra, 157, 160
Kakim, A.D., 135
Kangra Rajputs, 137
Kashmir Blue Book, 77
Kashmir Constitutional Reform Conference, 143
Kashmir: Day, 139; Muslims, 151; State Council, 132; Youth League, 150
Kashmiri: Hindus, 145, 147; Muslims, 140; Pandits, 150, 156
Kaufman, General von, 38
Kaul, Raja Hari Kishen, 139
Kaur, Rani Amrit, 155
Kaye, Sir John, 47
Kelly, Colonel J.G., 113, 115, 116
Khalikdar affair, 46
Khalsa, 1; forces, 13
Khan of Bahawalpur, 176
Khan, Ghazan, 64, 84, 102
Khan, Jafar, 89, 97, 98, 100
Khan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar, 152, 156, 158
Khan, Khudoiar, 38
Khan, Liaquat Ali, 163, 166, 171, 173, 175
Khan, Mahomed Nazim, 87, 101, 102, 104
Khan, Raja Akbar, 90
Khan, Safdar Ali, 64, 65, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 100, 101, 102, 103
Khan, Umra, 84, 110, 111, 112, 114, 115
Khan, Uzr, 89, 90, 95, 100
Khan, Yakub, 53
Khilafat movement, 134, 135, 140
Kimberley, Lord, 60, 61, 104, 117
Kinloch, 112
Kisan Sabha, 150
Kryzhanovsky, N.A., 36

L

Lachman Das, Diwan, 67, 68
Lahore Treaty, 9
Lang, L.E., 147
Lansdowne, Lord, 69, 71, 74, 77, 78, 82, 83, 87, 88, 89, 96, 102, 104, 109
Latimer, C., 140
Lawrence, Lieutenant Colonel Henry, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 18, 21, 23, 24, 25
Lawrence, Lord John, 10, 11, 34, 40
Lawson, Sir W., 128
Lee-Warner, Sir William, 61
Liberals, 140
Lockhart, Colonel W.S.A., 63, 64, 87
Low, General Sir Robert, 112, 115, 116
Lukput Rae, 7, 8
Lumby, E.R., 156
Lumsden, Sir Peter, 34, 35
Lyall, Sir Alfred, 89
Lytton, Lord, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54

M

Macartney, George, 88, 96, 101
Macartney, Sir Halliday, 88
Macgregor, Dr, 124
Mackenzie, Colin, 99
Maclean, J.M., 125
Majlis-i-Ahrar-Islam-Hind, 140
Mallat, Sir Louis, 54
Manners-Smith, Lieutenant J., 84, 95, 96, 99, 100
Marsden, Major, 26
Maula Bakhsh, 135
Maulvi, Mohammad Amin, 155
Mayo, Lord, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 53
Mazdoor Sabha, 150
Mazhar Ali, 140
Menon, V.P., 165, 166, 167, 169, 170, 174
Middleton, Leonard, 141
Minchin, Captain, 123
Mohammad Yusuf, Mirwaiz Maulana, 145, 157
Mohiuddin, Sheikh, 7, 8
Molony, Captain C.A., 99
Montgomery, Sir R., 48
Morier, Sir Robert, 108
Morley, John, 128
Mountbatten, Lord, 155, 162, 163, 165, 166, 167, 172, 173, 174, 175
Mughals, 1
Mukerji, Babu Nilambut, 67
Muslim: community, 136, 141, 155; Conference Party, 150, 151, 153, 154, 155, 157, 158, 159; grievances, 139; Kashmiris, 137

N

Nehru, Jawaharlal, 151, 152, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 162, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176
Nisbet, Colonel R. Parry, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74
Nizam-ul-Mulk, 51, 94, 109
North West Frontier Province, 132, 164
Northbrook, 48, 49, 51, 61
Northcote, Sir Stafford, 34

O

Official Secrets Act, 77
Osborne, W.G., 1

P

Pahalwan, Ghulam Mohammad, 148
Pakistan Resolution, 152
Pamirs Agreement, 109, 119, 120, 125, 126
Panjdeh incident, 63
Patel, Sardar Vallabhbhai, 160, 166, 175
Pathan invaders, 168
Pathan invasion, 162, 166
Perry, Sir E., 47
Petersen, 113
Pethwick-Lawrence, 158
Petrovsky, M., 102
Plowden, T.C., 66, 69, 70, 76
Praja Sabha, 149, 152, 154, 156, 158, 159
Prideaux, Colonel W.F., 94
Prinsep, Edward, 60

Purun Chand, 6, 10, 11

Q

Quit Kashmir day, 159
Quit Kashmir movement, 157
Qureshi, Abdul Majid, 148

R

Radicals, 133
Rai, Lala Lajpat, 135
Rajputs, 146
Ramanand, Seth, 70, 71
Ramsey, Captain H.I., 73, 74
Rani Jindan, 11
Rao, Sir Bengal, 155, 154
Rawlinson, Sir Henry, 33, 36, 37, 47
Reading, Lord, 136
Reinthal, Captain, 44
Responsible Government Day, 150
Ripon, Lord, 60, 61, 62
Ripon, Marquess of, 54
Roberts, Sir Frederick, 71
Robertson, Surgeon-Major George, 99, 84, 110, 111, 113, 115, 118, 121, 123
Rosebery, Lord, 119, 120, 125
Russian: Government, 108, 109; infiltration, 166
Russo-British: Agreement of 1872–3, 93; amity, 42; conversations, 42
Russo-Japanese War, 133
Russo-Turkish War of 1877, 51

S

Sale of Kashmir, 157
Salisbury, Lord, 108, 120, 125
Sanatan Dharm Yuvak Sabha, 150
Sapru, Sir Tej Bahadur, 149, 152
Second Afghan War, 53
Second Anglo-Sikh War, 13
Shadi, Mirza, 44
Shah, Moulvi Mohammad Yussuf, 138
Shah, Syed Hassan, 138
Shah-i-Mulk, 94
Shaw, R.B., 37, 43, 47
Sher Afzal, 110, 111, 114, 115, 120
Sher Ali, 41, 52, 53, 111
Sherwani, Mohammad Magbool, 154
Shuja-ul-Mulk, 120, 122, 123, 124
Sikh(s), 1, 8, 137, 147, 176; Government, 3, 4;insurrection, 24; Khalsa, 1; power, 2; state, 3, 4
Singh, Dhyan, 2, 3, 22
Singh, Amar, 70, 74, 136
Singh, Baldev, 158, 175
Singh, Dalip, 71
Singh, General Hukam, 2
Singh, General Jammal T., 161
Singh, Gulab, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 33, 48, 78, 136, 176
Singh, Hari, 135, 136, 137, 149, 160, 162, 163, 166, 176
Singh, Jawak, 135
Singh, Lal, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12
Singh, Maharaja Dalip, 11
Singh, Maharaja Nao Nihal, 2
Singh, Maharaja Pratap, 132, 134, 135, 136
Singh, Maharaja Ranbir, 27, 33, 36, 38, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 50, 51, 54, 59, 60, 62
Singh, Mian Partab, 61, 68, 69, 72, 74, 75, 77
Singh, Raja Amar, 69, 72, 75, 135
Singh, Raja Lal, 8
Singh, Raja Ram, 70, 72, 75
Singh, Ranjit, 1, 2, 3, 6
Singh, Sher, 2
Singh, Sir Amar, 134
Singh, Sir Maharaja, 153, 155
Singh, Suchet, 2
Smiles, Lieutenant Colonel Sir Walter, 142
Srinagar, 7, 26, 46, 49, 59, 62, 73, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 151, 152, 155, 156, 158, 162, 165, 166
St. John, Sir Oliver, 62, 67
Staal, G. de, 108
Standstill Agreement, 161, 162
Steinbach, Colonel, 22, 23
Stewart, Captain W.H.M., 96
Stewart, Lieutenant C.G., 113

Strachey, Lieutenant H., 17, 19, 26
Stremoukov, M. de, 41
Suraj Kaul, Rai Bahadur Pundit, 72
Symonds, 168, 170, 174, 175

T

Tavak Sabha, 133
Taylor, Lieutenant F.H., 100
Taylor, Lieutenant R.G., 23
Thomson, Dr T., 17, 19
Thornton, T.H., 39
Townshend, Captain, 110
Townshend, Lieutenant C.V.F., 101
Treaty of Amritsar, 4, 5, 157
Treaty of Lahore, 4, 12
Treaty of Nanking, 16
Twigg, Captain R.H., 99

V

Vigne, Mr G.T., 20

W

Wade, Claude, 3
Wakefield, G.E.C., 137, 139
Wali, Mir, 39, 40, 51
Walsham, Sir John, 66
Walton, John, 128
Waterfield, 112
Wavell, General Archibald, 157, 159
Webb, W.F., 157
Wedderburn, Sir William, 126
Wheeler, Brigadier, 9
Whitchurch, Surgeon-Captain H.F., 110
Wingate, A., 73
Wylie, Sir Francis, 153
Wynne, H.L., 46, 47, 49

Y

Yonoff, Colonel, 91, 92, 93, 108
Young Men's Mohammedan Association, 138
Younghusband brothers, 116
Younghusband, Francis, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 91, 92, 93, 96, 101, 102, 108, 116, 117, 133, 134

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